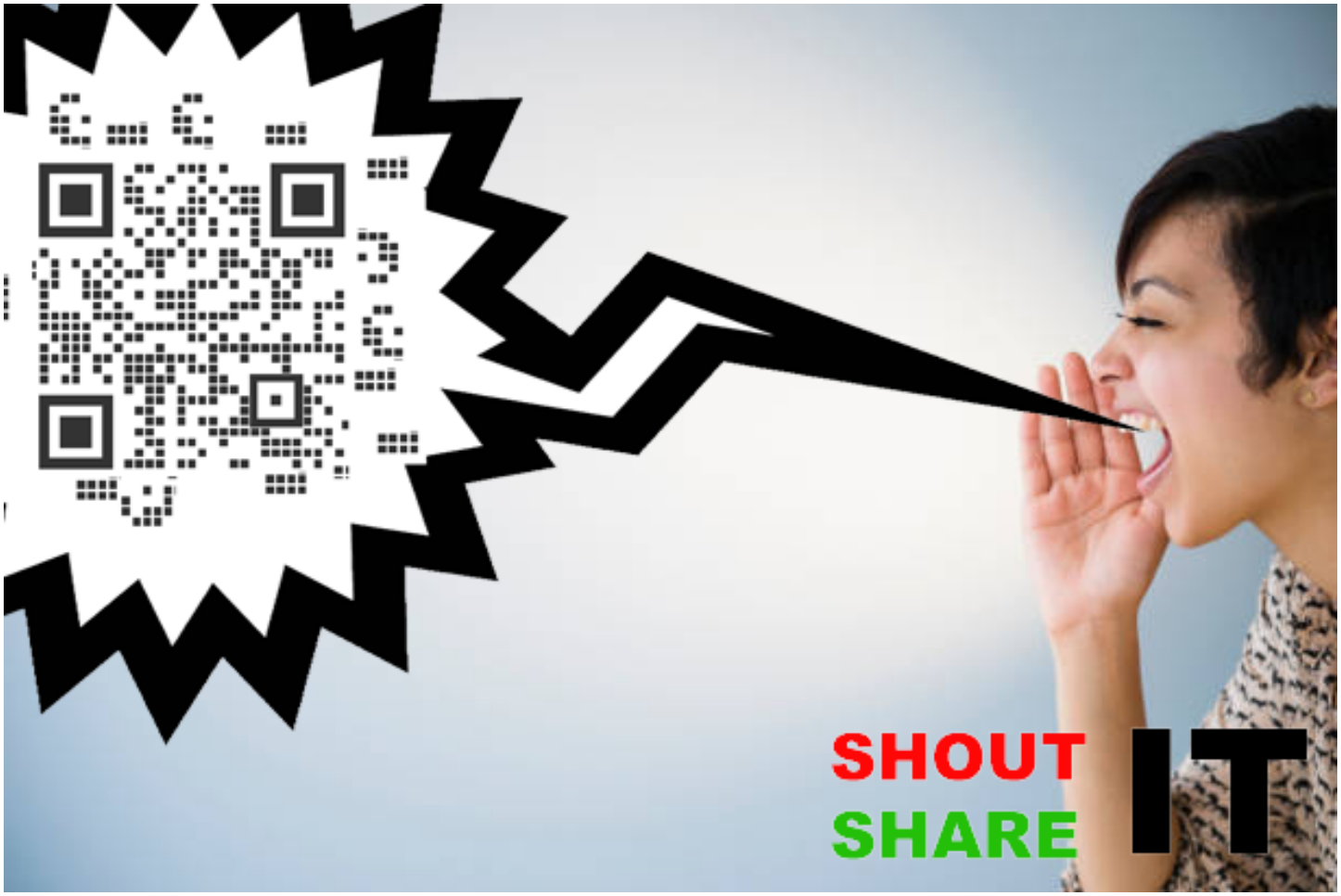
WHY BAD THINGS CAN'T HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE!

By AiR
Atman in Ravi

Because APPLES can't grow on MANGO trees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When Bad Things happen, there is no mystery,
We helplessly say, “Whatever will be, will be.”
It's our own actions that's causing our misery,
For the Cosmic Law says, “Apples can't grow on a Mango tree.”

Preface

In this world, there is a constant unfolding of events, some good and some bad. Life is like a merry-go-round and we pass both pleasure and pain in this journey called life. When good things happen, we are happy, but when tragedies strike, we become unhappy. Our sorrow reaches a peak when misfortune strikes good people.

Recently, somebody asked me a question, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” I answered without a doubt, “Bad things can't happen to good people, just like apples can't grow on mango trees. Such is the law of the universe.”

While I sent out my answer to the question, I realized that many people in this world live in ignorance with this belief and it is really sad that they think that bad things happen to good people.

As I grew up, I read several books that addressed similar topics. Authors and philosophers even questioned the power of the Divine and it is unfortunate that though we have an intellect, we are unable to discriminate and understand the truth. This world has been created by the Divine and it

operates through Divine Universal Laws. These laws need no intervention by the Creator. The Creator is not issuing orders or giving judgements on the actions of each of the 8 billion people who live on earth.

Then, how can people even imagine that the Divine is responsible for our miseries? Is it so difficult to understand that the Creator is not micromanaging the problems that confront us? Why then do we blame the Divine for whatever is happening in our lives?

The answer is simple. We human beings live in ignorance. We have not understood the Truth about the Creator and how Divine Laws manage the show on earth. We have not pondered over who we are and what is our true relationship with the Divine. We have not discovered the cause of our circumstances and what controls our destiny. Instead of realizing the Truth, we often look up at the sky and question, "Why? Why did this happen to me? Why is there so much injustice? Why do bad things happen to good people?"

The universe operates on some basic Universal Laws. The world seems to be in an auto mode and there is no intervention by anybody in the unfolding of events on earth. Waves in the ocean come and go, the earth rotates causing day and night and people and animals procreate as the world continues its existence based on many Universal Laws. Whatever happens to people is also controlled by a law and a very few people are fortunate to discover this secret as to why things happen, both good and bad, to every human being who lives on earth.

Living with this belief that bad things happen to good people is due to ignorance that envelops humanity. Because we are unaware of the existence of certain Universal Laws and how they function, we live, we exist, and we ultimately suffer and die. But we don't discover why bad things happen to people!

This book will create a paradigm shift and change people's perspective about problems and tragedies. It will help people realize that the Creator is Just and Powerful and his laws sustain this amazing universe moment by moment, as life unfolds on earth. It will show us a way to accept whatever happens joyously just as it will help us live an ethical life, doing good deeds which will become the seeds of our prosperous future, our destiny!

"Why do Bad Things happen to Good People?" we ask,
"Why does God do such a cruel task?"
Just as there are no Apples on a Mango tree...
We must realize that Bad Things don't happen Randomly.

01

WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN?

Whenever something unpleasant happens, a tragedy, a death or a tsunami, people get alarmed and cry, "Why?" Of course, the level of anger, frustration, worry, stress, and anxiety is multiplied many-fold when bad things happen to us and we feel the pain and suffering. But even if it happens to others, a road accident, a sudden death of a young man, a declaration of a presence of a deadly disease, all these make us so unhappy and depressed, that we cry aloud, "Why do bad things happen?"

What is the cause of bad things to happen? Is it just some random bad luck or is it the direction of the Creator whom we call God? Some people believe it to be the work of the devil, Satan or an evil force. Believers in God wonder, "Why can't God stop bad things from happening? Is God not all-powerful? Is God not capable of stopping the evil from unfolding on earth?" It becomes even worse when tragedies strike seemingly good people and the world cries, "Why? Isn't it so sad? What a pity! What injustice!" There seems to be no answer. Bad things seem to happen every day.

Susan was an honest and sincere social worker. She used to reach out to the poor and destitute and serve them. That was her job. She ran an orphanage and took care of the destitute and the discarded. She used to clean them, bathe them, feed them and take care of all their health issues. She had a lovely, happy family – a caring husband and two young children. One day suddenly, without any warning or reason, she died in her sleep, never to wake up. Her family was shattered.

Varsha was a pious woman. She had two children and she loved her husband. One day, her life shattered. Her husband left her and her two children and walked into a new marriage with a beautiful foreign lady. She was broken. She could not believe that this tragedy had struck her.

Charlie was a happy young man. One day he was driving on one of his business trips. As he was zooming to reach his destination, a truck hit his car head-on and it was over. He was crushed beyond recognition. Again, his family had no one to look up to. They were all dependant on him. They were devastated.

Richa was a caring and compassionate young woman. She loved her parents and refused to get married because she wanted to take care of them.Suddenly, one day her father died without any warning. Even as she was trying to cope with the loss of her father, her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Her mother began to experience progressively worsening symptoms of confusion and memory loss. She would ask Richa, "Who are you?" Richa was devastated.

Why do such unfortunate things happen to people? Is it because these people have done something wrong in their current lives and are facing the consequences of their actions? No! They are good people leading a virtuous life. We know that bad things happen to good people as well. Then why do bad things happen? Is it because the Creator of this universe whom we call God is cruel? Does God enjoy seeing humans suffer? Is God sadistic and he enjoys the misery of human

beings? Or is it something else? Is it that the Creator is not powerful enough that he is unable to prevent such things from happening? Is there an evil force, a devil, Satan, who works against God and every time God makes good things happen, evil spirits and ghosts appear and create tragedy for mankind? What is the reason for bad things to happen?

Many people believe that bad things happen because we don't have a good relationship with God. They think that evil unfolds because we do not pray enough, we do not visit our temple, church or mosque regularly and therefore, we are punished. But there are devout believers whose life is full of tragedy. There are people who pray every day and don't miss a single opportunity to go to their religious institution and follow religious practices that are laid down, but they still suffer. Why? Is God not satisfied by their devotion? Does God expect more from humanity and because we do not meet his expectations, he inflicts suffering upon us? Or, is it because man is cruel, unkind, and unethical? Do bad things happen because man is a sinner? Is that the reason why suffering strikes man, as a reaction to his own evil deeds?

Bad things can't just happen randomly. Sometimes, it is a tsunami that wipes out lakhs of people, an epidemic that destroys communities, or a fire that burns down an entire city. Why do such things happen? Humanity is unable to decipher why bad things keep happening on earth.

It is not rare to see a drunkard coming under a car and die. We realize that he himself caused the suffering to happen. There are people who are chain smokers and end up dying of cancer. They dig their own graves. There are even others who drive recklessly at breakneck speed. We are not surprised to hear of a road accident of such people. Humanity is quite aware of tragedies that befall man when man ignores risks and warnings. We hear of people drowning because they did not wear a life jacket when they were on a boat on high seas. There are people who tame tigers and one day if the wild animal mauls them, we are not surprised at their demise. There are also people who die in accidents because they are fire dancers by profession. Would we be surprised when tragedies happen to such people?

While people's choice of action causes tragic events in life, we human beings somehow can't digest when tragedies strike the world, or something terrible happens to us or our loved ones. Bad things keep happening in this world, just as good things also happen. While we enjoy the good times, it is the tragedies of life that make an impact on us, impacting our memory and stealing the gleam of our dreams. We celebrate the good times and forget about them, but the bad memories live forever.

But why do these bad things happen? People wonder, "Could life not be without these tragedies? Could the world not be devoid of such pain and suffering? Why is there so much disappointment and devastation? Why do we experience

disease and death? Why do we get so discouraged and disillusioned with endless tragedies that destroy our joy, peace, and bliss?"

What causes these calamities to strike us? It's not that only misery knocks at our door. There are moments of joy and celebration. People achieve success, enjoy holidays and celebrate birthdays. Life is a mix of both good things and bad things. Whenever something good happens, most of us spend a moment in gratitude to the Divine, but when bad things happen, we often think that it is God who is cruel.

Bad things cause misery, pain, and suffering. Is this necessary? A beautiful world becomes difficult to live in and cope with as we see suffering unfold day in and day out. But what can we do? Can we stop bad things from happening? Can we stop a hurricane from killing a community? Can we stop a disease from wiping out hundreds of people? Bad things happen and we seem to be helpless spectators.

Many philosophers in this world have pronounced that this world is full of suffering. They have analyzed that any human being who is born, experiences pain. No human being can escape from misery. While we experience physical pain of the body, common aches that knock at each of our doors, we also experience misery of the mind. We live with fear, worry, anger, hate, and revenge and we are victims of our own mind. We also suffer the agony of the ego when we get angry, upset, and disappointed. Things happen to us causing us pain of the

mind, body, and ego and it seems that none of us can escape from suffering and misery. The Buddha, the awakened one, made the world accept the reality that we cannot escape from suffering. While we all accept suffering in our life, the only pity is when we see suffering strike good people and the scoundrels of this world apparently going scot-free. While we can do very little to stop bad things from happening, and we can digest tragedies striking dishonest people, our heart breaks and cries when we see a misfortune befalling good people. When bad things happen to bad people, we can somehow accept it. But why do bad things happen to good people? This question constantly haunts us.

When bad things happen, don't ask, "Why?"
Don't fold your hands and look at the sky,
Sure, we see misfortune strike at our door,
But look deeper and find out why you slipped on the floor.

IN A NUTSHELL - CHAPTER 1

Why do Bad Things Happen?

- Many people believe that bad things happen because we don't have a good relationship with God. Some people believe it to be the work of the devil, Satan or an evil force.

- What is the cause of bad things to happen? Is it just some random bad luck or is it the direction of the Creator whom we call God?

- Believers in God wonder, "Why can't God stop bad things from happening? Is God not all-powerful?"

- It becomes even worse when tragedies strike seemingly good people and the world cries, "Why? What injustice!"

- Bad things keep happening in this world, just as good things also happen. But what is the cause of these calamities that strike us? Can we stop bad things from happening? These questions constantly haunt us.

- While people's choice of action causes tragic events in life, we human beings somehow can't digest when tragedy strikes.

- Bad things can't just happen randomly. We need to realize the Truth and eradicate the ignorance we live in.

02

WHY DO GOOD PEOPLE SUFFER?

Across the world, we find this a challenge beyond our comprehension. We find that the murderers, the cheaters, and the dishonest ones suffer. But along with them, we also find honest, sincere, and hardworking people facing the trials and tribulations of life.

When a religious community is praying in a sacred religious place and a bunch of terrorists come with guns and shoot them indiscriminately, the world cries in horror. It sees men, women, and children covered with blood as the terrorists flee. These were devout believers and they were praying to God when the tragedy occurred. How could God permit this to happen?

Why do good people suffer? People just can't understand this. Is God cruel? Has God designed the world in such a way that even good people must suffer? Is God not powerful enough to stop disasters from attacking good and honest people? There are so many good people in this world who suffer. Why?

Sometimes, people wonder how a family that took care of 200 destitute people caught a serious disease and perished. The entire family of five had dedicated their life to take care of these discarded and destitute people. They did not treat them any less than family. They cared for them, fed them and took care of their aches and pains. When the entire family caught the deadly disease and died, the neighbours were shocked, “Why did such a tragedy have to fall upon such amazing people?” The world has no answer.

Is there any doubt that good people also suffer or is suffering only for the evil ones? If God was a good and kind God, then he would not let good people suffer. We know for sure, that God is all-powerful. He controls whatever happens on earth. He can stop any misery from striking. Why then does he permit good people to suffer? It's perfectly ok when evildoers face a tragedy. But why does God permit a tragedy where those who are good are attacked? Man believes that if he does good things, then good things will happen to him, but despite doing good things when bad things come as a result, man is bewildered and astonished.

Man is capable of performing actions. But man is not capable of controlling the results of his actions. Whatever happens on earth is somehow controlled by the Divine. If the Divine is just, kind, and powerful, then good people should not suffer. Across the world, often we see good people suffer. It is not because of some random unfortunate events but misfortune strikes many good people. Day in and day out, we see good people around us, suffer.

Since the Divine is responsible for all the results of our actions, then why does it seem that he is not ensuring good results to be the outcome of good actions? If the Divine was all-powerful, then why would bad things happen to good people? If the Divine was just and kind, then why would he permit the result of actions to be a mismatch where good people suffer and bad people enjoy?

Sam was a kind young man. He believed in God and never told a lie all his life. He was a vegetarian and did not cause harm to animals. He had no bad habits, never smoked a cigarette and never touched alcohol. He never did anything dishonest. He was blessed to have married Sarah, the most beautiful girl his family had ever seen and they both seemed like the best couple in the world. Within months, Sarah was diagnosed with cancer. She was pregnant but before she could deliver the baby, death struck and Sam's heart was broken. Sam was devastated and his family had no words to console him. How could God be so cruel?

The Guptas were a joint family. They were the richest in the little town that they had controlled for over four generations. Not only did they make a lot of money, but they had also built a charitable hospital to serve the poor, orphanages for the destitute and even animal shelters. One day, as if from nowhere, a deadly fire burnt their entire home and took the lives of many of their family members. Their insurance cover had just expired the day before, which means that they were completely destroyed. Why did such a disaster unfold on such good people? They were known for their benevolence, humility, compassion, and kindness. Why then, did nature strike such a cruel blow on them?

Daniel was a Christian priest. All his life, he had prayed to God. He was loved by one and all for his devotion and commitment to God. People didn't understand why he had no children even ten years after his marriage. One day the good news came. Daniel became the father of a lovely boy. The congregation had planned a big celebration for the naming ceremony and prayed to God for his glory and his blessings

on the priest. On the day of the naming ceremony, the baby collapsed. The doctors could not assert any reason for the sudden demise of the supposedly healthy child. The congregation was stunned!

When good people suffer and bad things happen to them, people are unable to accept. They question, "Why?" They blame God. They blame themselves. They look at the sky and cry. But they are not able to understand why bad things happen to good people. When the good suffer, the world gets dejected. Even the believers in God get frustrated and start wondering as to why God permits such suffering to unfold on earth. While people fail to understand this, but those who believe, feel that there must be a reason for whatever is happening.

Is God unfair? Is God incapable of stopping bad things from happening to good people? If the Creator was all-powerful, then why would good people suffer? Is the Creator unable to stop disasters from attacking even good people? Is God not omnipotent, all-powerful as we think God to be? What stops God from preventing this injustice that happens in this world?

The world lives in a dilemma. People can't understand. When bad things happen to bad people, it seems fine. And when good things happen to good people, it is fair. But why do good people suffer and why do the scoundrels of this world get away with all their treachery? This is something beyond human comprehension. People are unable to digest this injustice and often question God as to why this is so.

Some people believe that this world is like a drama, just like in any theatre, both good and bad things are part of the plot. If the storyboard has any one emotion, then the drama loses its charm. They believe that God has created this universe as his *Leela,* a theatre of his fantasy. To make his *Leela* exciting, he has created both good things and bad things to unfold on earth. While bad things unfold, sometimes they befall upon good people and sometimes, bad people. Some people believe that this is why good people suffer. But is this so?

What is the answer? People can't understand why good people suffer. People know that there is a law and we receive what we deserve. But when things that happen on earth do not seem to follow the principle of action and reaction, people are not only confused but become depressed and hopeless. In their helplessness, they have no choice but to look up to God and question his power – "Why O God, do you permit such injustice to happen on earth?"

When we see good people suffer, it makes us cry.
"Why this injustice?" we think, "O God, tell us why?"
"Is it because you are not powerful or you are not kind?
Tell us, O Lord, how to reconcile our mind?"

IN A NUTSHELL - CHAPTER 2

Why do Good People Suffer?

- We find that the murderers, the criminals, and the dishonest ones suffer. But along with them, we also find honest, sincere, and hardworking people facing the trials and tribulations of life.

- Why do good people suffer? People just can't understand this. Is God cruel? Or is God not powerful enough to stop disasters from attacking good and honest people?

- Man is capable of performing actions. But man is not capable of controlling the results of his actions. Whatever happens on earth is somehow controlled by the Divine.

- But people wonder, "If the Divine was all-powerful, then why would bad things happen to good people? If the Divine was just and kind, then why would he permit the result of actions to be a mismatch where good people suffer and bad people enjoy?"

- The world lives in a dilemma. When bad things happen to bad people and good things happen to good people, it seems fine. But why do good people suffer and why do the scoundrels of this world get away with all their treachery? This is something beyond human comprehension.

03

IS GOD RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR MISERY?

While we cry when bad things happen and we lament when we see good people suffer, we somehow look up to what happens as a work of God. Most miseries, besides a few that relate to our business, our education and our love life, are attributed to acts of nature. Whether it be an untimely death, a horrible disease or a natural disaster, all these are attributed to God.

Who is responsible for an earthquake? The Sumatra Indonesia earthquake on 26th December, 2004 with a Magnitude 9.1 claimed many lives. This was the third-largest earthquake in the world since 1900. Apart from the estimated 227,898 people who were killed or were missing and presumed dead, about 1.7 million people were displaced by the earthquake and the subsequent tsunami in 14 countries in South Asia and East Africa. Why did such a devastating earthquake and tsunami happen? Who caused it? Did God order it? Does the Creator actually issue instructions for all the misery that unfolds on earth?

In a fire that happened at the Kamli Theater, Japan, 1893 over three thousand people were present, and of these around 1,995 people were killed in the accident. The fire had broken out from the theatre's fuel-lit lights and had spread to the mats that were covering the entire stage and hall areas. Was this an act of Nature or was it caused by man? Whatever be the cause, why did thousands of people have to suffer the misery of this fire?

The Black Death was one of the most devastating epidemics of

plague that attacked humanity in the middle of the 14th century. Misery struck the world in a time when the global population was an estimated 450 million. It is said that at least 20 million people perished in Europe alone and some estimate the world-wide death toll to be 50 million. Twenty to thirty percent of Europe's population is supposed to have been obliterated in a span of about four years. The plague's name comes from the black skin spots on the sailors who travelled the Silk Route. They brought with them from their voyage to Asia this devastating disease. Also known to be the bubonic plague, this disaster is one of the most striking misfortunes that humanity has ever seen.

The 1931 Yellow River flood was a devastating flood on the Yellow River in China. The flood, according to historians, is said to have affected as many as 53 million people. The death toll has been estimated as high as two million. People, children, infants, homes, belongings were just swept away. The flood destroyed houses and farmland. In the Yangtze Valley around 15% of the wheat and rice crops were destroyed. With no food, people were reduced to eating tree bark, weeds, and earth. A complete breakdown of civic facilities including sanitation, led to the outbreak of several diseases such as cholera, measles, malaria, dysentery, and schistosomiasis. Why did such large scale destruction have to happen? Families were wiped out. The flooding followed by the outbreak of diseases led to a further loss of lives.

Who hasn't heard about the sinking of the Titanic? The luxury

steamship Titanic sank in the early hours of April 15, 1912, off the coast of Newfoundland in the North Atlantic after hitting an iceberg during its maiden voyage. Of the 2,240 passengers and crew on board, more than 1,500 lost their lives in the disaster. What should have been a celebration, a glorious moment for mankind turned into months and years of mourning, of grief and loss. Why?

Who is responsible for all these natural tragedies? We know beyond doubt that it is God! God controls the universe and we believe that it is God who is causing these tragic events. If God wished, he could stop these tragedies from happening. If God was kind, he would not let humanity suffer. This is how we think, but is it true?

The question that humanity faces is why does God permit suffering in this world. If there is God and he has created this world, then why has he created so much misery? Why is there so much disease, death, and destruction? Why is there so much heartache? And worst of all, why does God let good people suffer? If bad things happen to bad people, we wouldn't raise an alarm to God. But what happens when bad things happen to good people? When we see good people suffer, it seems to be an unjust life situation, then who else can we question apart from God?

Some people think that God is responsible for bad things to happen. They even consider God to be a cruel dictator who lets

misfortunes sweep the world without any care or compassion. They misunderstand God and think that he is like a ruthless dictator who is not concerned about the welfare of his people. They blame God for being ignorant about this misery and call out to God in agony and tears when they suffer and they question God as to why they are suffering.

Some people think that God is sitting in distant heaven or up in the mountains somewhere or even down below in the ocean hidden, giving orders for everything to happen on earth. Is there a remote possibility for something like this to happen? One God controlling the circumstances for 8 billion people, moment by moment, giving orders and ensuring that his will unfolds! Ridiculous, this looks impossible!

Imagine John is a thief and a killer, and he murdered many people in a bank. John is one of the 8 billion people on earth. Would God be watching John's actions and passing judgements for each of the actions of each person in this world? How is this practically possible? There seems to be no doubt that God has set up a universal system through a law that is monitoring our actions and there are automatic rewards and punishments. John cannot escape from his bad deeds. Eventually, he will suffer the consequences of his actions. John's father is Adam, and Adam is constantly helping the poor, teaching them skills that can give them employment, collecting funds for homes that are washed away by floods. Just like God cannot be watching John, God is also not watching Adam, but God has created a process, created systems that are controlled by a law. Adam will be gifted for his good deeds eventually. While God is not issuing instructions for the actions of John

or Adam, God is ultimately responsible for the way this universe runs.

God is not micromanaging everything that happens on earth. While God is the producer-director of this drama called 'Life' that unfolds on the humungous stage called the Earth, God is not responsible for all our actions that cause the circumstances on earth as they unfold. We human beings are responsible for whatever happens on earth, but we do not realize this truth. God may have written the storyboard, controls certain Universal Laws by which we are born, but God is not giving commands to control everything that happens on earth.

John and Adam are father and son. But their present actions do not create the same reward as one is performing good deeds and one is performing bad deeds. Whatever happens to John and Adam, is a response to their cumulative actions. God gives both of them the freedom of choice. They can choose their actions, but thereafter, they are responsible for the reactions. God is not responsible for a bad reaction, just as God is not responsible for the actions of John and Adam.

For us to understand how God seems to be managing the show on earth, let us imagine a simple calculator. If we press 2 plus 2, 4 will show up on the screen. But if you press 2 minus 2, then the answer on the calculator is 0. God is not responsible for what appears on the screen. The buttons we press decide what will happen on the display screen.

In today's world, there are millions of computer programs and

the whole world is functioning through computers. The computers function through a program. So also, God has created a program. We often hear in the technology world, 'Garbage in, garbage out'. What does this mean? The computer program processes what comes in and appropriately delivers what goes out. So also, God has programmed this world but we seem to be ignorant of it.

Just because misery strikes humanity, we can't blame God. What is happening is just a response to our own actions processed by a universal program instituted by the Creator. If this was not so, we would see apples growing on mango trees and jackfruits falling from coconut trees. The thought of this itself seems to be ridiculous, but we are not able to reconcile as to why bad things happen to seemingly good people.

The Creator seems to have a set of Universal Laws by which the world is governed. It is not practical for God to issue instructions to control each and every action of all people who live on earth. What then is the cause of the misery that unfolds? What then is the reason for bad things to happen to people on earth who seem to be good?

Why do we blame God when bad things happen? Why do we believe that God is responsible for all our misery? Why do we think that the Creator is so helpless that he is unable to prevent bad things happening to good people? This is because of our ignorance. We are ignorant of the Universal Laws, more so, of the Law of Karma, the Law of Action and Reaction, which proclaims

that good actions will result in good circumstances, just as bad deeds will cause bad things to happen. God is not responsible for bad things to happen. God has created his laws and the laws unfold based on our actions. Why then should we blame God? Why should we hold God responsible when good people suffer and when bad things happen to good people? Whatever is happening is happening as per the Universal Laws.

The Creator whom we call God loves us. He cares for us and there is no question of God inflicting misery upon us, least of all to let good people suffer in an unfair manner. God is not responsible for our miseries. As long as we are ignorant about the Law of Action and Reaction, we will never realize the truth and accept its verdict. Let us understand the law.

Many people think that it is God's command,
We suffer bad things because it's his demand.
But God is not responsible for our suffering and bad luck,
It all depends on what we sow, that is what we will pluck!

IN A NUTSHELL - CHAPTER 3

Is God Responsible for Our Misery?

- God controls the universe and we believe that it is God causing these tragic events. If God wished, he could stop these tragedies from happening. If God was kind, he would not let humanity suffer. This is how we think, but is it true?

- Some people think that God is sitting in distant heaven or up in the mountains or somewhere down below in the ocean, giving orders for everything to happen on earth.

- We must understand that God is not micromanaging everything that happens on earth. While God is the producer-director of this drama called 'Life', God is not responsible for all our actions.

- The Creator seems to have a set of Universal Laws by which the world is governed. We human beings are responsible for whatever happens on earth. But we do not realize this truth.

- What is happening is just a response to our own actions processed by a universal program instituted by the Creator. If this was not so, we would see apples growing on mango trees and jackfruits falling from coconut trees.

- As long as we are ignorant about the Law of Action and Reaction, we will never realize the truth and accept its verdict. Let us understand the law.

04

THE UNIVERSAL LAW OF ACTION AND REACTION

Every day, we see good things happen on earth just as we see bad things. While we are happy when good things happen, we get shattered when tragedies attack. Of course, it's bad when some good people known to us seem to be victims of injustice. It is even worse when believers in God, face helpless situations when seemingly unfair misfortunes strike them. Many people continue to live in ignorance as to why such things happen, but there are some who believe that there must be a reason. These bad things are not happening without something causing them to happen.

No doubt bad things happen in this world, but they are not a dictate of the Divine. Everything in this world unfolds based on a Universal Law – the Law of Action and Reaction. Recently, this has gained popularity as the Law of Karma. What is this law?

The Law of Karma states, "As you sow, so shall you reap." If you plant apples, you will get apples, not mangoes. It is the law that prevails everywhere in the universe. Nobody can escape from this law.

While we see this law unfolding on planet earth in many ways, there is no proof of this law. Just like the several Universal Laws in this world, these laws exist and we know of them only through inference. Can we prove the Law of Gravity? We can't! But when we throw an object up in the sky, why does it come back down to earth? We infer that this is due to gravity and this establishes by inference, the existence of the Law of Gravity.

Just like the Law of Gravity has no proof, but is accepted

through inference, so is the Universal Law of Action and Reaction accepted through inference. When we plant mangoes, we don't expect jackfruits to appear on the tree. Such is the law. Just as this law unfolds, and we reap what we sow, its application is universal – it applies to everyone and everywhere on earth.

This law is also known as the Law of the Boomerang which states that what goes around, comes around. It is very natural for good deeds to beget good responses just as bad deeds can expect bad reactions in return. Despite the existence of this Universal Law of Karma, we human beings are unable to decipher why bad things happen to us. Isn't it obvious that it is our own bad deeds that are coming back to us? When good people suffer, why are we unable to realize that it must be the Universal Law that is causing the suffering? More so, why do we blame God for everything that happens on earth? Why don't we understand that whatever is happening, is happening as per the Divine Universal Law of Action and Reaction, also known as the Law of Karma?

What is this Universal Law of Karma and how does it work? The law as we understand states 'what we give is what we get'. Every action of ours, good or bad, is recorded by the universe. Our good deeds of the past unfold as good circumstances, just as our bad deeds will cause us to suffer. The Universal Law of Karma makes no mistake. It keeps on recording our actions. Even at death, our karmic account is not wiped out. The balance

in our karmic account becomes the cause of our next birth. Therefore, all our actions, good or bad, become the cause of our circumstances and we cannot escape from our own actions. The law is so powerful that even death cannot nullify our score. In fact, the law seems to have 3 types of accounts. One account is the corpus or the carried forward account with the reservoir of our actions. At the end of our life, whatever be our balance, plus or minus, it gets added to our corpus. It is from this corpus, positive or negative, our next life is decided.

To understand the Law of Karma, and appreciate it in its entire context, we must understand the 3 accounts and how these 3 accounts work. Each of us human beings must act. We cannot escape from action. Action may be either good or bad. Every good action will be marked positively and beget a good reaction, just as every bad deed will be marked negatively and will be returned as an unfortunate circumstance. The Universal Law of Karma cannot be circumvented. Nobody can escape from the law. As we live, we have a current account of Karma. The current account is recording all our current actions, good or bad. Sometimes, our good and bad actions cause an immediate positive or negative reaction as per the law. But there are times when these deeds get deposited in our account for a future redemption. No human being dies settling their entire karmic account. Death is uncertain and sudden, and whenever it comes, there is an unsettled account of good and bad that gets transferred into our corpus or 'carry forward' account. This is like a warehouse of our Karma. Because there

is an unsettled good and bad account, our body dies but ME – the Mind and the Ego, has to be reborn to face the good and bad that is unsettled. In fact, the circumstances of our birth or rebirth as we may call it, depend on our karmic account. If we have a large positive balance, we are born in very fortunate circumstances. But if we have a large negative balance, then we may be born, only to suffer misery, misfortune or poverty.

Our corpus or warehouse of Karma is not just the closing balance of this life, but probably a cumulative balance of several lives that we may have lived. Each life has a current account for the present life, but each life also has an opening balance. The opening balance is derived from the corpus or warehouse and is to do with what will unfold in our current life.

To understand the Universal Law of Action and Reaction, popularly known as the Law of Karma, we must be absolutely clear with all the 3 accounts that exist in the law. Let us imagine that John was a criminal who created misery, not only in the life of the rich but also stole from the poor. There was no crime that he did not do. He murdered, he raped and he stole, but it seemed like his life was perfect. It looked like he was immune to the Law of Karma. He was rich and famous, and enjoyed all the luxuries of life. These present circumstances of John were the result of his previous actions when he was Smith. Smith was a pious, God-fearing human being, who served not only his family, his neighbours and his community, but also reached out to animals on the street that suffered without any care. Smith had a lot of positive Karma, but he died without redeeming the fruit of his good deeds. Smith was reborn as John and thus, was

enjoying the rewards of actions that were performed when he was Smith. Suddenly one day, John was diagnosed with cancer, and soon after, died. Was it all? No! John had wiped out the good deeds that he had earned when he was Smith. Now he has tonnes of negative Karma for all his crimes that are left unsettled as his death.

John now takes rebirth as David. David has no feet and is blind. To everyone, it seems that God must be cruel to let such a child be born. But those who understand the law realize that this child who would soon be called David is carrying forward the negative Karma of John.

We must clearly understand that death is not the end, only the body dies, but the one who was alive, ME – the Mind and the Ego, is reborn and carries the unsettled Karma, not just of the previous life, but sometimes of several lives. In this case, if John's crimes are too heavy, then David cannot settle the negative Karma in his lifetime, but may have to be born one more time with even more misfortune and suffering to negate the crimes done by John. Such is the way the law seems to work.

Therefore, how many accounts must we be conscious of that every 'ME' creates? A Mind + Ego =ME, never dies. It moves from one body to another along with its Karma. It carries a carried forward corpus or warehouse of Karma. In the above instance, the ME was first born as Smith, then John and finally David. It seems like 3 different lives, but actually it is one. Just because I change my shirt and wear a T-Shirt, do I become a different person? So also, the one who was Smith, changed the

body to John and later David, but the account of the Karma was the same. When Smith was born, the circumstances of his birth depended on what his corpus balance was. Probably, it was positive balance and Smith was a peaceful man. Because Smith did good deeds, his current account was also positive and in the end, his corpus became even more positive.

From this very positive corpus of Karma, a large chunk was used as the opening balance of John's life. If there was no balance in the corpus, then this chunk could not be used to ensure a luxurious life for John. By using the corpus, the good Karma no more exists because it is redeemed. Instead of making the opening balance of positive Karma increase, John's crimes not only wipe away the positive balance of the opening Karma, but also create tonnes of negative Karma which gets added to the corpus when John dies. Prior to being John, the corpus was positive. But after living as a criminal, the corpus is now burdened with a huge negative. Therefore, when David is born, he is born in miserable circumstances. This is needed to wipe off the negative corpus. There is no opportunity for David to be born in positive circumstance. However, David's birth with so much misfortune has wiped out the negative corpus which was redeemed as a negative opening balance. Now depending on David's actions, his Karma will get added to the corpus at death and will ultimately decide what the 4th generation of this ME will be.

To understand why bad or good things happen, we must

perfect ourselves in the understanding of the Law of Karma. Those who understand the law and accept it, do not question whatever happens on earth. They know that they cannot stop certain things from happening as these are our own Karma returning to us. Those who understand the law well, do not question why bad things happen. They do not wonder why good people suffer, nor do they hold God responsible for our misery. They know the answer to all these questions is the Law of Karma, the Universal Law of Action and Reaction. However, it is not easy to understand this law. The karmic law which is a universal principle, unfolds in a manner that baffles humanity. Although it is a law that operates everywhere on earth, and no nation can escape it, no religious group can avoid it and no living being can circumvent it, we human beings continue to ask questions because we are ignorant about this law and how it unfolds and operates.

Why are some people born in fortunate circumstances, just as some others are born in unfortunate ones? This is because of their karmic account. People who have lived a good pious life, with kindness and compassion, doing good deeds, have built a positive corpus of Karma. Their next birth will be in happy and healthy circumstances. On the contrary, those who have lived bad lives, with cruelty and heartlessness, harming others, causing terror and destruction, build a negative karmic account. They can be expected to suffer in their next birth. While there is no proof of this, we understand the existence of

this law by inference. Why else would some people suffer and some celebrate during their next journey on earth? It seems there is no other reason than their own past actions that are the cause of joy or sorrow in their next birth.

When we are born, we carry with us some portion of our karmic corpus as an opening balance of our present life. This is the cause of our positive or negative circumstances at birth. Added to the opening balance, are actions of our present life. Good or bad, positive or negative, all our actions get recorded in the current balance which merges with the opening balance. While the opening balance causes our present circumstances, our present actions can do both – wipe out the sins of our past Karma and lay the seeds of our future through good present actions and create a destiny of our dreams.

At the end of our life, whatever be the balance, the ones we carried forward, as well as all the actions of this life, will be accounted, totalled and the balance will be added to the corpus so that it decides our next birth.

God has no direct role to play in the unfolding of this law. God has created this Universal Law but God doesn't decide whether we will have positive or negative circumstances. God doesn't decide whether good things or bad things will happen in our life. This is decided by the Law of Karma as per our own actions. Such is the Universal Law!

While the entire universe works on the principles of Universal Laws and the Law of Karma is one such law that we cannot escape from, it is strange that we human beings blame God for what happens in our life. When bad things happen in this world, we are unable to realize that these are our own past actions unfolding as per the Universal Law. When good people suffer, we are unable to understand because we are ignorant about this Universal Law. Our ignorance is so deep, that we go about blaming God for the bad things that happen to us on earth. If only we understand the meaning of this Universal Law of Karma and how it works, we would not blame God. We would not regret the tragedies that unfold in our life. We will not be surprised when we see some good people suffer. If we realize the truth, we will not ask the question, "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

'As you sow, so shall you reap' is a Universal Law.
If you do bad things, you will be caught by the claw.
Whatever you do in the world, it is absolutely true,
The Good or bad you do will surely come back to you.

IN A NUTSHELL - CHAPTER 4

The Universal Law of Action and Reaction

- Everything in this world unfolds based on a Universal Law, the Law of Action and Reaction also known as the Law of Karma.

- The Law of Karma states, "As you sow, so shall you reap." If you plant apples, you will get apples, not mangoes. It is the law that prevails everywhere in the universe. Nobody can escape from this law.

- We must clearly understand that death is not the end - only the body dies, but the one who was alive, the ME – the Mind and Ego, is reborn and carries the unsettled Karma, not just of the previous life, but sometimes of several lives known as the corpus or an opening balance.

- Our actions, good or bad, get recorded as the current balance and merge with the opening balance.

- At the end of our life, whatever be the balance, the ones we have carried forward as well as all the actions of this life, will be accounted, totalled and the balance will be added to the corpus so that it decides our next birth.

05

APPLES CAN'T GROW ON MANGO TREES

If you love to eat apples, you must know that they grow on beautiful apple trees. However, have you, by any chance, seen apples growing on a mango tree? Never! Why? Because apples are not meant to grow on any other tree except apple trees. If we expect jackfruits to grow on coconut trees, that's just not possible. Why?

There is a Universal Law that states, "As you sow, so shall you reap." As per this law, if you plant mangoes, you cannot get apples. If you want jackfruits, then don't plant coconuts. If you do, then expect coconuts to grow in your garden. While we understand this law, why is it that we don't understand that bad things can't happen to good people, just as apples cannot grow on mango trees?

Some people don't get this straight. They look at a fruit and wonder, "Why have I got this fruit?" They don't realize that the fruit depends on the root. It is a Universal Law – as is the root, so will be the shoot and the fruit. If we plant mangoes, why are we expecting apples to grow on the tree? If thorns pop out of our garden, we shouldn't question, "Why?" Obviously, we have planted them.

While it doesn't seem so difficult to understand that apples can't grow on mango trees, we human beings struggle to understand why bad things happen to good people. Bad things can't happen to good people. It is just not possible! Such is the Universal Law. But people say, "Of course, we see bad

things happen to good people all the time! What kind of law are you talking about?" It is simple. It is the law of Cause and Effect!

There is no doubt that bad things are happening, and they seem to be happening to good people too. There is no doubt that these people are good, but unfortunately, we miss upon one important fact. While these people may be good, if bad things are happening to them, they must have done some bad deeds. Those who understand the Universal Law of Karma, understand that it is a Law of Cause and Effect. If mangoes are growing on a tree, mangoes are just an effect. The mango seed is the cause. Because of mango seeds, there are mangoes. There cannot be apples. If bad things are happening to some people who seem to be good, somewhere in life, they must have done some bad deeds. Either the bad deeds have been performed in the past that is now forgotten or even in a life prior to the present one, but as per the law, if bad things are happening to seemingly good people, these are just an effect of the cause. The cause is bad deeds done in the past. As per the law of the universe, it is impossible that without bad deeds, bad things can happen to anybody just as it is impossible for apples to grow on mango trees.

While there is no proof of this Law of Cause and Effect, there is inference. Just like we cannot prove gravity but we infer that it is in force because every time we throw something up into the sky it is pulled back towards the earth by a force that we call

gravity. When there is such inference, there is no need of any further proof. The inference itself is the proof.

Shyam was diagnosed as being HIV positive. By the time he realized it, it was too late and he was about to die. All he did was to cry and ask, "Why?" He could not reconcile to his suffering for he felt he had not done anything to deserve it. Could the deadly disease appear without a cause? There was no doubt that it was his own action that caused it, whether it was a direct action that led to this or whether it was an indirect one done somewhere in the past that was getting back at him. He started to curse God and blame God for being unjust and unfair.

However much we may blame God, can we accept that God caused apples to grow on the mango tree? While we understand his Universal Law of Cause and Effect, we are somehow unable to relate to this law in our life. We may consider that God is not powerful enough to stop injustice or we may even consider that God is cruel when we see a bad effect without a bad cause. We are not using our intellect to realize why this is happening. We don't trust in the Universal Law and don't try to accept it. Thus we continue to live and die in ignorance.

Rajesh lived in a village but he always aspired to go to the town. He had no parents and he lived with his uncle who had a large farm. One day, Rajesh was given a bucket of seeds as his uncle wanted to plant a row of trees all around the periphery of the farm. Rajesh started planting the seeds but before he could complete it, his friends started troubling him, asking him to join them for a movie. Rajesh was caught between the task assigned and

his friends. He was tempted to go with his friends to the city for the movie. His friends convinced him, "Just dump those seeds in one corner, and tell your uncle you finished the planting. How would he know?" Rajesh did exactly that. He was thrilled that he could now go to the city for the movie as dumping the seeds at one place saved him a lot of time!

Thereafter, Rajesh found a job in the city and moved out for the period of his contract. After the contract, he returned to his uncle's farm and joined his uncle for a walk, giving him an update of his work in the city. As they walked, the uncle pointed at the beautiful row of trees that Rajesh had planted before he left. He had forgotten what he had done, until the farmer, while appreciating his work, asked him the question, "What happened here, Rajesh?" They reached a point where the farm turned into a marsh. Suddenly, the beautiful row of trees turned into a jungle. Rajesh immediately remembered that he had dumped all the left-over seeds here. He covered his face in shame and cried, narrating what had happened that day. The farmer explained to him, "In life, you may cheat anybody, but you can't cheat nature. Whatever you sow, you will reap. You had beautifully planted the seeds till here, and the row of the majestic trees are a proof of your good work, just as the jungle is a proof of your irresponsibility. There can be no effect without a cause, such is the law!"

There are many Universal Laws prevalent on earth and each of these laws advocates a profound truth. They are natural laws, laws that are unquestionable, laws that apply to all of humanity. It is for us to understand the laws, to accept them and to live by them gracefully. If we don't, we are bound to suffer.

We have already mentioned the Law of Gravity. While we can't prove this law, we are sure it exists. When we throw an apple up, it comes right back to the earth. It never flies away into the sky. The same is true for the Law of Karma. We infer that it exists because apples can't grow on mango trees! The Law of Karma doesn't make a mistake, just as the Law of Gravity is perfect. All Universal Laws unfold everywhere in the universe without exception.

The Universal Law of Opposites exists in several domains of the universe. There is day and there is night, just as there is pleasure and pain, loss and gain, summer and winter, north and south, amongst others. The Law of Opposites exists and we must accept it, just as we must accept the Law of Cycles. Everything in this world is cyclic, like the cycles of spring, summer, autumn and winter, day and night, and the cycle of a woman's ovulation. These follow each other without any intervention as per the law. Like all these Universal Laws, the Law of Cause and Effect or Action and Reaction, is firmly grounded in our life. Some may call it the Law of Karma, and others the Law of the Boomerang.

The Universe works with these laws and it is these laws that cause a smooth ongoing life on planet earth, just as they do in the cosmos. The Law of Balance somehow works in the world and makes things balanced. We have not been able to understand this law very well but we see that a Law of Balance prevails. It brings back the balance in our life and the world around us.

There is a Law of Order that synchronizes everything on earth. Our human body has over 30 trillion cells and the body functions in perfect order, just as trees grow in a forest, fish swim in the water and birds fly in the sky. Don't we find perfect order in God's creation? What causes this order? A Universal Law!

It is very important for us to understand these Universal Laws, only then we will realize why bad things cannot happen to good people. Instinctively, we know apples cannot grow on mango trees. But this is because of the prevalence of a Universal Law. Similarly there is a law called the Law of Energy. This law pronounces that everything is energy. The universe vibrates with this energy. Science has developed several branches like quantum physics and quantum mechanics that work on the principle that energy can neither be created nor destroyed but can only be transformed from one form to another. This famous principle has further evolved into the 'Wave-Particle Duality'. Science has discovered that energy and matter are no different. Energy becomes matter and matter becomes energy and this is coined as the 'Wave-Particle Duality'. It is just another Universal Law.

There are many such Universal Laws. The entire universe functions and operates through the existence of such laws. The Law of Compensation ensures that everything in this universe is compensated. This brings further balance and moderation and avoids extremes. Together, all the Universal Laws synchronize to create a perfect universe. They ensure that there is no conflict.

Have you ever pondered on the Law of Causation? Every effect has a cause. The effect is nothing but the cause itself in another form. If you remove the cause, there is no effect. Gold is the cause. The ring, the bracelet, and the chain are just the effects, the different forms of gold. But if you remove gold, neither will there be a ring, nor a bracelet or a chain. The effect appears because of the cause. Apples on the tree are just an effect. The cause is what we planted, just as bad things that take place in our life are an effect of the bad deeds committed by us in the past. They cannot happen to people, who seem to be good unless there is a cause. We must realize the Truth about these Universal Laws.

Have you ever thought why the Sun rises first in Hong Kong and then in Mumbai? This is because the earth is rotating in an anti-clockwise direction. Suppose tomorrow, the earth decides to change its rotation and starts rotating in a clockwise direction, then the Sun would first rise in India and then later in China. But this doesn't happen. It has not happened for several thousand years because it is based on a Universal Natural Law. These Universal Natural Laws have been created by the Creator as the universe runs by these laws. Nobody can stop these Universal Laws from prevailing and unfolding.

In this universe, if bad things happen, then these bad things are only a reflection of our own actions. Maybe we are not able to understand why, because we do not remember what we have done in the past, but if we understand the Universal Law of Action and Reaction, then we will not question the unfolding of these bad events in our life.

The rotation of the Earth or Earth's revolution proves that the Law of Cycles exists. Summer follows spring, just as spring is followed by autumn and what arrives after this is called winter. Seasons change and we all know it. Have we seen the universe unfolding in a manner when all 4 seasons turn out to be winter alone? This would throw the cosmos out of gear. Humans and beasts, all would die. While we understand the unfolding of such Universal Laws, why do we find it difficult to understand the law of action and reaction? When we are sure apples can't grow on mango trees, then why do we question, "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

Do fruits grow randomly on any tree
Or they appear depending on the Lord's decree?
Do we ever see apples growing on a mango tree?
A Universal Law ensures that this can never be.

IN A NUTSHELL - CHAPTER 5

Apples can't Grow on Mango Trees

- Have you, by any chance, seen apples growing on a mango tree? Never! Why? Because apples are not meant to grow on any other trees except apple trees.

- While it doesn't seem so difficult to understand that apples can't grow on mango trees, we human beings struggle to understand why bad things happen to good people. Bad things can't happen to good people. It is just not possible!

- Those who understand the Universal Law of Karma, understand that it is a Law of Cause and Effect.

- If mangoes are growing on a mango tree, mangoes are just an effect. The mango seed is the cause. Because of mango seeds, there are mangoes. There cannot be apples.

- Similarly, if bad things are happening to some people who seem to be good, somewhere in life or in previous lives, they must have done some bad deeds.

- We may consider that God is not powerful enough to stop injustice or we may even consider that God is cruel when we see a bad effect without a bad cause. We are not using our intellect to realize why this is happening. We don't trust in the Universal Law and don't try to accept it. Thus we continue to live and die in ignorance.

06

WHY DOES A NEWBORN SUFFER?

Who doesn't feel sad when they see a newborn battling with life? It is an innocent young child who has done nothing wrong to anybody. It is just born. But it is blind. It can't see. Just the thought of its miserable life can break anybody's heart. What is the cause of this suffering?

Susan and Rocky were in love and after 4 years, they were blessed with a baby. They were very good people, helpful to the community and connected to God. The baby was adorable but within months, sad news hit them. The child had muscular dystrophy. This meant that the muscles would degenerate and become weak, leading to a life on a wheelchair. It was not just that, there would be all kinds of complications in breathing, swallowing, and ultimately, an early death. Why was this young child suffering? They couldn't understand. They made an appeal to God with tears, but the suffering did not cease.

Rahul was a lovable and handsome child. Unfortunately, while he was in primary school, the family realized that he had some form of dyslexia, a learning disorder which meant that he could not read and learn as normal children would do. It would mean having a poor memory and growing up being clumsy. What wrong had Rahul done? He was such an innocent young boy but he was fumbling and mumbling.

Shiva was born to a middle-class couple. They were struggling to live. Their struggles peaked when they realized that Shiva was both physically and mentally challenged. After much deliberation, the couple decided to leave Shiva in a charitable home. "What wrong had Shiva done?" the parents cried. But they had no option. They could not manage their work along with taking care of this child.

If we look at all these children, it confuses us as to why these young kids are going through such pain. After all, these kids have not done any harm to anybody. But they suffer. Why do bad things happen to innocent babies? If the one who is suffering is an adult, we can accept the Law of Action and Reaction, Cause and Effect, unfolding in their life. Bad things are happening to them because they must have done something bad. But what about these young kids? They have not done anything to anybody. Then why do they suffer?

If we ponder deeply into the suffering of young kids, we will realize a profound Truth. These young kids may look tiny in size, but there is a history that they carry with them which is very long. How is this possible? These children may appear to be just born, but they have an account of their previous actions that have not been redeemed. The suffering that we see in these children is not by chance, nor is it God's choice. These children seem to have created Karma, actions in their previous life. It is their Karma causing this suffering to unfold. Why would, otherwise, suffering attack these children but let other children live in fortune and luxury? It is because of an unsettled negative account that the young children are born with and hence, they suffer.

The Law of Action and Reaction doesn't close the account so easily. It tracks every action of every person, not only when we are alive but even after death and our karmic score is carried forward life after life. What does this mean? This means that

the suffering of these young children seems to be a suffering of ME - Mind and Ego of the one who was alive in an earlier life and has committed certain deeds. While the action was over in the previous life, the reaction was incomplete. The deeds were completed, but the reward or punishment was not. The seeds were planted in the previous life, but the suffering that we see are the fruits of those seeds that we cannot see. There is no other possible inference. It is not that God is incapable of stopping this, nor is the Creator cruel as some people may seem to think. What is unfolding is nothing but the Universal Law.

According to the Law of Action and Reaction, if I commit some actions in America, and I shift base to India, I will not escape from my actions. The law will inflict upon me what I deserve. So also it is the same with ME – Mind and Ego. It deserves the fruit of my actions. Sure, I might have dropped my previous body, but the one who is alive is the same person, the same ME - Mind and Ego.

This law is very complex and beyond common understanding. Those who contemplate the suffering of young children realize through inference that if I was a young body, my body was not suffering, but it was ME – my Mind and Ego that was suffering in the new body that appeared on earth. It was not a new story that started at birth, but rather a continuum of several lives that had all its actions and reactions accounted in the karmic law that caused suffering to these young children.

Those who are ignorant about the Universal Law, continue to wonder in frustration looking at a young child suffer. This is because they do not realize that this young child is not suffering without reason. They do not understand that the body of this young child carries within a ME, Mind and Ego that has a 'carry forward' account. If this carry forward account is negative and is filled with evil deeds of the past, it cannot escape the negative score that it carries. The negative Karma has to be redeemed and since it cannot be redeemed due to death of the ME, the Mind and Ego, in the previous body, the suffering is carried forward to the ME in a new body that seems to unjustly suffer at birth. Those who understand the law, realize that there can be no injustice in this law. It works on a Universal Principle of Action and Reaction. Nobody can manipulate this law.

When we see a young child suffering, the suffering is not just of the child, but of everybody around, including the mother and father. The suffering of the parents must be due to an unsettled account apparently unknown to them. Even to the child, the suffering is that of the Mind and Ego, it is not the young child that seems to suffer. Suffering can't just happen to anybody without reason. It is the result of something and this is not an assumption, but rather a presumption based on Universal Laws that exist on earth. The Law of Cause and Effect makes us understand that there cannot be an effect without a cause. If we light a fire, then there will be smoke. Similarly, when we see smoke, we understand there must be a fire somewhere. While we are clear about fire and smoke, our ignorance stops us from realizing why a young child suffers. If the young child is

suffering, there must be a cause. Just because we are unaware of the cause, we cannot condemn the suffering as unjust and unfair. Instead, we should use our intellect to realize that the suffering we see only goes on to prove that there is some unsettled negative balance accompanying the one who is born as this little baby, due to past bad actions that may have been committed sometime in the recent or distant past.

Why else would some children be born in fortunate circumstances and some in unfortunate ones? Why is there disparity in the fate of young children who have done no harm to anybody? Obviously, this is not some random act of the Creator. If such was the law of the Divine, then one would see apples on mango trees, just as one would see pineapples, cherries, and strawberries growing on every other bush. The Universal Law tells us otherwise. It is a very specific law, easy to understand for those who observe and accept it. They do not question when the law unfolds with its just redemption. The law is not cruel or unkind. The law is just making sure that there are apples on apple trees and there are mangoes on mango trees. The law ensures that good deeds beget good rewards, just as bad things befall those who commit bad deeds. The law does not know how to execute reverse actions. That is why apples cannot grow on mango trees.

If children are suffering, there is no doubt that parents, family, and anybody who sees the suffering will feel sad. But if we want to realize the Truth behind the misery, we must

understand how this Universal Law of Action and Reaction works. It cannot be changed or manipulated – it is a Universal Law! If I throw an apple in the sky, can somebody stop it in mid-air? Normally not, because the Universal Law of Gravity will pull it down. As the earth rotates, causing day and night, can someone stop night from happening? The Universal Law of Cycles is unstoppable.

Just as these Universal Laws can't be changed, controlled or stopped as they unfold on earth, children will continue to suffer if they carry with them an account of bad deeds that have not been redeemed. This does not make this world a cruel place, nor the Creator unjust and harsh.

If we want to understand the source of this suffering, then we must get into the details of who actually suffers, what exactly is death and what is the meaning of life thereafter.

How do you feel when a little baby cries?
It suffers from disease and soon it dies!
Don't you think, "What harm has this little one done?"
We must realize why this misfortune has come!

IN A NUTSHELL - CHAPTER 6

Why does a Newborn Suffer?

- When we see an innocent newborn infant who has done nothing wrong to anybody, suffering from some serious ailment, we wonder, "What is the cause of this suffering?"

- If we ponder deeply into the suffering of young kids, we will realize a profound Truth. These young kids may look tiny in size, but there is a history that they carry with them which is very long.

- Those who are ignorant about the Universal Law, continue to wonder in frustration looking at a young child suffer. This is because they do not realize that this young child is not suffering without reason. They do not understand that the body of this young child carries within a Mind and Ego, ME, that has a 'carry forward' account.

- Children may appear to be just born, but they have an account of their previous actions that have not been redeemed.

- Those who understand the law, realize that there can be no injustice in this law. It works on a Universal Principle of Action and Reaction. Why else would some children be born in fortunate circumstances and some in unfortunate ones? Why is there disparity in the fate of young children who have done no harm to anybody?

07

THE MYSTERY OF DEATH AND AFTERLIFE

To understand why bad things happen in this world and why it seems that some good people suffer, we must try to understand the reality of life and death. A person doesn't suffer after death because bad things can't happen to a dead person. Good or bad, whatever comes to us, it comes to us during a period called life. Who causes fortune or misfortune - whether God is responsible or not and whether there is a Universal Law that controls this, will be understood if we unravel the mystery of death and afterlife. Otherwise, while we are sure that apples cannot grow on mango trees, we will still feel bad when we see a young child suffer. This is due to our own ignorance about life, death, and the afterlife that unfolds as rebirth.

Death is a mystery. The world has not been able to define what exactly death is. We see a person alive and then suddenly, the person dies. What exactly happens? The body of the person lies in front of us but we feel that this body is not the person who was alive. We say the person passed away, expired or departed although the body of the person is right here in front of us. This is not the person, it is just the mortal remains. Where is the person who was alive and who is the one who moved on if this body is not the person?

Ram passed away. We say "Ram is no more," but Ram is right here in front of us. This is not Ram. Ram died. This is the dead body of Ram. Then, who actually is Ram and where did Ram go? Can Ram ever come back? In a short while from now, we will cremate the body of

Ram. The body will become ashes and Ram will no more be visible, either dead or alive. Still, we know that the one who was alive as Ram left the body of Ram and moved on at death.

While we are very clear about the story of Ram, why are we not clear about the story of Shyam? Shyam was just born in the house of a millionaire. He was given all the comforts and luxuries that only a rich child could afford. He grew up in the lap of luxury. Why? What is the reason for Shyam's good fortune? We are unable to realize that the life of Shyam is nothing but a continuation of the one we knew as Ram. Ram died and along with his name, his body perished. But the ME who was Ram – Mind and Ego, still had its Karma, unredeemed actions that had to be settled. In this case, the one who was Ram had a lot of positive balance in his account and so he was born in fortunate circumstances as Shyam. If Ram had tons of negative deeds that were not redeemed, then Ram would have not been born as Shyam. Ram would have probably been born as Dhawan in the slum, miserable and suffering. While there seems to be a clear connection due to the Law of Cause and Effect, we sometimes aren't able to understand that whatever is unfolding, is nothing but an effect of the cause. In this case, the cause which is Ram's actions bears fruit as the effect in the life of Shyam after Ram dies. The body of Ram may have died but his mind and ego carried with it all the good deeds, and the effect is seen in the life of Shyam. This is not complicated if one understands the simple Law of Action and Reaction, Cause and Effect.

To understand this further, we must realize who was the actual performer of the action. While it appears that it was Ram, the actual performer was the ME – the Mind and the Ego.

The ME directed Ram to perform. Ram was the instrument through which the action was being performed but the one accountable for Ram's action was the ME of Ram. In this life, the ME was doing as Ram, but when Ram dies, the ME moves on to take birth as Shyam. The ME is now receiving the rewards, being reborn as Shyam. The ME has not changed. It first appeared as Ram and now it is appearing as Shyam.

In fact, death and the afterlife are not a mystery anymore. It is just history that unfolds! It is our past that appears as our future, based on our own actions. The only point to understand is that the actions performed in one life appear as the reaction in the next life. Why else would somebody be born in fortunate circumstances and another in unfortunate ones? This is not a matter of random chance or luck, but the unfolding of the Universal Law of Karma.

Therefore, if a newborn suffers, we should know beyond doubt that the suffering that is caused, not just to the newborn but to the related family as well, is a reaction to an action performed in the past unknown to us. We may see apples growing on a tree. We did not see anyone planting the seeds, but by inference we know if apples are on the tree, it is because somebody planted apple seeds. If they had planted mango seeds, there would be no apples, but rather mangoes on the tree. Imagining that there will be apples when we planted mangoes, only reveals our ignorance about the Universal Law. The law exists and nobody on earth can circumvent it. It will

unfold exactly as Quid pro quo – this for that. It doesn't know how to operate otherwise.

This world itself seems to be operating on another Universal Law, the Law of Cycles as we see our life to be cyclic. Our life doesn't end at death. The cycle continues. The body dies, but the ME – the Mind and the Ego, continues its cycle in a new body. It doesn't end there. The cycle continues - death, birth, and death again. But at this point, we are only worried about understanding why apples can't grow on mango trees. What matters to us is to realize the truth that bad things can't happen to good people. If bad things are happening, then these are nothing but bad seeds that are sprouting as bad fruits. If they were good seeds, they could never become bad fruits. Such is the Universal Law.

People are still confused about whether there is an afterlife or not. In reality, there is no confusion. It is obvious by inference that an afterlife exists. Why is this so?

First of all, when a person dies, we believe that the person is rewarded or punished for actions performed. The reward or punishment is only possible if the person is reborn in a new body. How else would this be possible? Even if one has to go to heaven or hell as claimed by many Religions, how would one go if the body perished on earth? Thus it seems that one is reborn or resurrected in a new body to face one's past actions.

Secondly, the simple observation that some people are born rich

and some poor, some fortunate and some unfortunate, some lucky and some unlucky, and some sad and some happy, indicates the existence of a law that can only unfold if there was an afterlife. A new birth seems to be the effect, but what is the cause? We infer that there can be nothing other than an afterlife that is the cause of our circumstance when we are born.

Even science believes that energy can neither be created nor destroyed but can only be transformed from one form to another. Recent scientific experiments have proved that the tiniest particle of the human body is nothing but energy. You and I may appear to be 'us', but in reality, we are trillions of energy particles that when put together appear as the body, but the subatomic particle of each cell is nothing but energy. It seems that the energy of ME - Mind and Ego, move into a new body.

While there seems to be no doubt that there is an afterlife, modern-day technology has made it possible to track how some young children are able to recollect huge volumes of memory of a past life. How else could this be possible without an afterlife? There are many things that a newborn does and we may say that it is their instinct but deeper contemplation will reveal that this instinct is nothing but ME, the Mind and Ego that is reborn with the memory and is the one that carries with it what an instinct seems to be capable of doing.

A young child suddenly starts playing the piano. How did the

child ever learn to play the piano? It is a skill that must have been developed earlier. How else could somebody just be an expert in playing the piano? Probably, it is another faculty associated with the mind, the memory that is reborn as this child.

One should not doubt the fact that 'death is not the end'. It is only a bend. We have seen many people die and we know beyond doubt that only the body dies. While the body lies in front of us, we declare without hesitation that the person who was alive has passed away. We use various terms like expired, departed or moved on although the body of the person who died is right in front of us. We know beyond doubt that this is not the person but only the dead body of the person. Then who has departed? It is the one who was alive, the Mind and Ego, that we can refer to as ME.

It is sad that most of humanity doesn't understand what a human being comprises. While we understand how our computer works, we don't understand how our body works. Just like the computer has hardware but it needs software, our gross physical body needs a software or subtle body which comprises the mind, memory, intellect, and ego. Apart from the hardware and software, what else does the computer need? It needs a power supply without which it would be dead. Our body too will be dead if there was no power supply. We know beyond doubt that the 30 trillion cells that we are made up of, come alive with power signals. But at death, our entire body structure becomes lifeless. What causes the power

supply in the human body? What gives the human body - the hardware and the mind - the software, power to move and function? Our body and mind are powered by the Soul. The Soul is nothing but Life Energy that gives power to the body from birth to death. We must be very clear about the functioning of the body, the mind and the Soul.

As long as the body is alive, empowered by the Soul, it is the ME – the Mind and Ego, that directs the body to act. When the Soul departs, we experience death and there is no breath. The body lies in front of us, but the ME – the Mind and Ego, moves on to next life, along with the unsettled Karma, deeds or actions that it carries in its cumulative account. Unless we human beings are clear about body, mind and Soul, we will continue to think of death and afterlife as a mystery. But if we realize that the Soul escapes into the consciousness that is everywhere, then it is easy to understand that the dead body is cremated or buried, but the ME – Mind and Ego, has to be reborn to settle its outstanding balance.

Often, the understanding of death and afterlife is interrupted by the misunderstanding of the Soul. What is the Soul? The Soul is the Life Energy that causes birth and departs at death. It is just a power supply and is not part of the body-mind complex involved in action and reaction. The Soul is a silent spectator. It is like energy in a bulb that causes the bulb to glow. At death, the Soul or the Consciousness within us merges with the Consciousness that is everywhere.

For those who still don't understand how the Soul leaves the body and becomes one with consciousness, they should take two rubber balloons that look like dead pieces of rubber and blow air into them. Suddenly these balloons become full of life. Now when we deflate these balloons, they return to becoming dead pieces of rubber. Can we recover the air that was in these two balloons separately? Impossible! The air that was in the two balloons has merged with the air that was everywhere. So does our Soul. At death, our Soul is released into the Cosmic Consciousness that is omnipresent, present everywhere. Many people confuse Soul to be 'Good Souls' and 'Bad Souls'. They even think that the Soul takes rebirth without realizing that Soul is only the Divine Life Energy that arrives at birth and departs at death. The Soul is not reborn, nor does the Soul suffer or enjoy the results of our bad deeds and good deeds. It is only ME, the Mind and Ego, that is reborn along with its accumulated Karma and either enjoys or suffers in a new body due to the circumstances that appear in the new life based on its own past actions.

Therefore, actually, there is no mystery about death and afterlife. For those who realize the truth, this is the Universal Law of Cycles that is unfolding. One life leads to another. The body dies but the Mind and Ego are reborn along with the Universal Law of Cause and Action, Action and Reaction. Not only are we reborn, but we are reborn based on our own deeds.

People submit to the belief that our destiny is preset. We

cannot control or change it. In reality, some part of our life will definitely unfold as per our past actions. But some part is in our hands. We, the Mind and Ego that drive the body, make choices and these choices become the actions that lead to reactions in our future life. The ones who realize the Truth about death and afterlife, who have demystified the confusions that cloud their mind, live with the realization that they cannot escape from their actions, even at death. There is another profound discovery. If we plant good deeds throughout our life, these good deeds will not be wasted. They remain in our karmic account. This leads to another realization that we, in fact, control our destiny.

What happens at death, the person has passed on,
The body lies here but the one alive has gone.
Where has he gone, the one who was alive?
Wherever he be, but he will soon arrive.

IN A NUTSHELL - CHAPTER 7

The Mystery of Death and Afterlife

- To understand why bad things happen in this world and why it seems that some good people suffer, we must try to understand the reality of life and death.

- Good or bad, whatever comes to us, it comes to us during a period called life.

- Death is a mystery. We see a person alive and then suddenly, the person dies. The body of the person lies in front of us but we feel that this body is not the person who was alive.

- There is another universal law, the Law of Cycles. Our life is cyclic. It doesn't end at death. The body dies, but the ME – Mind and Ego, continues its cycle in a new body. The cycle continues - death, birth, and death again.

- People are still confused about whether there is an afterlife or not. In reality, there is no confusion. It is obvious by inference that an afterlife exists.

- The reward or punishment is only possible if the person is reborn in a new body. How else would this be possible? Even if one has to go to heaven or hell as claimed by many Religions, how would one go if the body perished on earth?

- Some people are born fortunate and some, unfortunate. It indicates the existence of a law that can only unfold if there was an afterlife.

08

WE CONTROL OUR DESTINY

As we realize the profound Truth that apples can't grow on mango trees, that bad things can't happen to good people, it leads us to a greater Realization. There is nothing in the world like 'luck'. We are the masters of our destiny. Through our own present actions, we control our future.

Karan, Rahul, and Rishab were sons of Mr. Jain. They grew up going to the same school and branched out into different fields. Their parents loved them and had put in a lot of effort to help them succeed in life. About 10 years later, when the 3 boys returned for a family reunion, a strange scenario filled the air in the Jain residence. Karan had become a millionaire. He had bought several cars, had not just one home but a few holiday homes and had built huge financial reserves in a successful life that he had carved for himself. Rishab was not so successful but he seemed very happy with the modest job in a bank that made him feel secure. Rahul, however, was in tatters. Not only did he appear beggarly, but he also looked frail and his misery showed all over him. What caused the fate of these 3 brothers who grew up together? Why was one super successful and one a dismal failure? Was it just chance or was it choice? People would argue and many would believe it was just luck. Others would go one step further and say that it was the choices that these boys made. While choices are very important to determine the destiny of our life, we must realize that these choices can be made based on certain opportunities that may open up to us. These opportunities don't open up by chance. Very few people realize that our circumstances, our breaks and opportunities are often the results of our own past actions that are coming back to us.

It is most unfortunate that people think life is made up of chances. They don't realize the fact that it is made up of choices and not chances. What may appear as luck, is actually something that we pluck based on what we sow. If we understand the law 'As you sow, so shall you reap', then we understand that we can reap a destiny of our choice, by controlling what we sow. If we want apples on the tree, then we must not plant mangoes. Those who blame God for their misfortune are ignorant about the Universal Laws. Some people even believe God not to be omnipotent, thinking that God is not all-powerful and that God is subject to the power of the devil who causes misfortune, despite God's efforts. This is a myth. The Creator is omnipotent, all-powerful and omniscient, knows everything. The Divine is kind and compassionate and has created Universal Laws, which we must understand, accept and follow. If we fail to do so, we suffer. But if we can understand the laws of the Divine, then we can take charge of our actions and control our destiny.

The seeds that we planted yesterday are the trees that will bear fruit today, just as the seeds that we plant today, will become the trees that will bear fruit tomorrow. What is happening in our life today is sometimes beyond our control because it is based on our past actions. However, our future can be controlled because that is based on our current actions. If we take charge of our deeds, then we can control what will happen in the future. Our destiny doesn't depend on anyone else, except ourselves. It is not a matter of luck or chance. But rather it will unfold based on our own actions. Today's actions are the

cause. Our destiny is just the effect. By controlling the cause, we can control the effect. If we want a better reaction, then we must change our actions.

For those who believe that our future is based on luck, they must wake up to the Truth that it is not luck, but rather Karma that controls our future. Karma itself means action and the Law of Karma bypasses luck or chance systematically, giving each individual what they deserve, based on their own actions.

Whatever happens on earth, is unfolding as an effect of a cause. Just like we know that if strawberries are growing in a bunch, it is because somebody planted strawberries and not cherries. Of course, we have a choice. If we want cherries, we can plant cherries. But complaining why strawberries appear while wanting cherries, and then planting strawberries makes no sense. Everything is happening as per the law of the universe. Nothing can change it, except our actions. Our actions control our future. Our destiny is the combination of our past and present actions, which are within our direct control.

For those who don't understand how this works, the best analogy is that of the car and the road. We are driving a car, but the road is full of bumps. It is a bad road. Can we control the road? No, we can't! The road that appears is nothing but the unfolding of our past actions. If our actions were good, we would be on a smooth highway. The road is the effect of the cause, our own past actions. However, the car is in our hands.

We can control the car, go fast or slow, turn left or right. The car symbolizes our present action which is completely in our hands. Together, the road and the car symbolize our life. Our life is a combination of past actions which appear as the road which we cannot change and our present actions, which is the car, very much under our control. Together, we drive through life. If we want a great destiny, let us perform some great deeds, for they will unfold accordingly. There is no magic involved. The logic unfolds as per the Universal Law.

Sandeep's life was miserable. People who saw his life unfold used to feel sad for him. It looked like he was carrying tons of negative Karma. Nothing seemed to go right in his life. His personal life was in a mess and his financial condition was in doldrums. But Sandeep believed his destiny was in his hands. He met a Spiritual Master who taught him to accept whatever happens with a smile. He also taught him to surrender to the Divine will, and to keep on doing his best, for the law would ultimately unfold in his favour. One day, as if by magic, Sandeep's life was transformed. Everything turned around and he seemed to be a man who was not just successful, but also blissful. What caused this? What suddenly changed a destiny that was in the dumps?

Our destiny is in our hands. While we cannot control the path on which we walk, we can monitor our footsteps. There is no doubt that some aspect of our life is unfolding as per our past actions. But we still have a choice to discriminate and choose our present actions that will ultimately sow the seeds for tomorrow's fruits. While our past actions have caused the present to unfold, it is our present actions, our deeds of today

that will control our destiny and our fortune of tomorrow. This is not a matter to believe or not to believe in. We should know it. Do you believe you have a nose on your face? You don't need to believe that. You know very well that you have a nose. You can touch it, feel it and see it in a mirror. You need to believe only things that you don't know. When you know that apples can't grow on mango trees, when you know you reap what you sow, then you must know that you control your destiny. While you know this, you must not be ignorant of the fact that you carry with you an unsettled account of past Karma that will unfold and interfere with your destiny unless you learn to deal with such circumstances with actions that can overcome such misfortunes. Those who understand the Universal Law and plant positive deeds, eventually create a destiny of their dreams.

When we experience suffering, we curse and we cry. We don't understand "why" this suffering appears in our life. If only we did, we would gracefully accept it. So many people suffer on earth, not because they are doomed to suffer, but more because they cause their own suffering. If only we realized this, we would stop planting thorns so that our future is full of beautiful flowers. Those who understand the ins and outs of the law realize that our account doesn't end at death and sometimes, we may be surprised at how the law is unfolding because we don't know what our carry forward score is. Whether it is suffering or bliss, it unfolds as per our own past actions.

Therefore, when something happens, something not so good, a misfortune, a tragedy, learn to accept it. It is our own past coming back to us. If we don't realize how the law works, we will only complain and cry and this will not help us in any way. Those who understand the Universal Law, live gracefully, accepting whatever comes and do their best to create a destiny of their choice. In fact, when something bad happens, they rejoice, because they realize that their past bad deed is redeemed. The negative is over, and they look forward to the positive to unfold. They don't question a tragedy when it appears, but they are happy that they have endured the tragic result of a bad deed done by them in the past. Once all the negatives are over, they know that life will be full of bliss and joy. For one to live peacefully and blissfully, one must have complete trust in the Universal Laws. One must not doubt or question what unfolds on earth.

When something bad happens, we must accept it with a smile.
It's our own Karma returning and maybe longer than the Nile.
The sooner our bad deeds are over and gone,
We will be liberated from misery, and not be reborn.

IN A NUTSHELL - CHAPTER 8

We Control our Destiny

- As we realize the profound Truth that apples can't grow on mango trees, that bad things can't happen to good people, it leads us to a greater Realization. There is nothing in the world like 'luck'. We are the masters of our destiny. Through our own present actions, we control our future.

- The seeds that we planted yesterday are the trees that will bear fruit today, just as the seeds that we plant today, will become the trees that will bear fruit tomorrow.

- Today's actions are the cause. Our destiny is just the effect. By controlling the cause, we can control the effect. If we want a better reaction, then we must change our actions.

- Therefore, when something happens, something not so good, a misfortune, a tragedy, we should learn to accept it. It is our own past coming back to us.

- For those who believe that our future is based on luck, they must wake up to the Truth that it is not luck, but rather Karma that controls our future.

- Once all the negatives are over, they know that life will be full of bliss and joy. For one to live peacefully and blissfully, one must have complete trust in the Universal Laws.

09

REALIZE THE TRUTH

While there is misery and suffering in this world, and it is sad to see people suffer, we must realize the Truth behind life and suffering. If we don't, we will live in ignorance and our misery will only grow. It is one thing to experience pain, but it is another to suffer the misery, feeling that this world is unfair, or that God is unjust or not powerful enough to help us overcome our suffering.

There is no doubt that this world is full of suffering. Everybody who is born must suffer and ultimately die. This does not mean that there is only suffering. Life is a merry-go-round of pleasure and pain and we pass them both every now and then as we live. We experience the physical pain of the body, emotional pain of the mind and the agony that the ego suffers when it cannot achieve its expectations. We all experience what can be called the 'triple suffering'. But what is the Truth behind this suffering?

Can we escape from misery and pain? As long as we live, it is natural for the body to experience pain. It may be a root canal that causes us pain, a fracture of the bone during play, or some kind of disease in the organs of our body. The body ages and as it does, our aches and pains only increase. Can we escape from this pain?

The mind is constantly thinking. It is said to think a thought every second and this can become up to 50,000 thoughts a day. This constant clutter of the mind causes stress and anxiety. The

mind jumps into the past and makes us regret. We nurse, curse and rehearse our hurts and feel sad. Then, it jumps into the future and causes us to fear and worry. What can we do with our mind? While it does cause us happiness, it is responsible for our hate, jealousy, regret, fear, worry, revenge, stress and anxiety. Who doesn't go through emotional torture? As long as we live, we experience joy, but we are not excused from sorrow.

Our triple suffering is completed by the ego. Not only do the body and mind suffer, but the ego is also constantly creating misery. We get angry, depressed, irritated and upset because what we want doesn't happen. The ego creates desires and very often, our desires are not met. We become disappointed and discouraged and we suffer in our defeats. Nobody in this world can win all the time. But our ego wants to. While we are in command of our actions, we are not in control of the results thereof. But the ego doesn't want to accept this. It cries in agony and suffers in shame.

Can anybody deny that everybody in this world experiences this triple suffering? What is the solution? Some people even contemplate suicide so that all the misery of this world could come to an end. But those who realize the Truth, know that death is not the end, it is just a bend. They realize that there is a way to slowly end suffering. It may take time, but it will happen if they constantly and consistently plant positive deeds. They realize why there are no apples on the mango tree. They come to know of the Universal Law that bad things can't

happen to good people. Of course, there is suffering, but we are the cause of our misery. Why do we blame God? Why do we presume that God is responsible for our misery?

Those who realize the Truth understand the meaning of life, of death, of suffering, and of bliss. They understand the Law of Karma that it is the Law of Action and Reaction. Whatever be the reaction, it is the mirror image of our action. This restricts the suffering as otherwise, we put salt on our wounds to only make our suffering fester. The ones who realize that this universe operates on the Law of Cause and Effect, accept whatever is happening as an effect and realize that they are the cause, not God who is sitting somewhere far away in heaven, giving orders that misery should strike us.

When there is a sudden death of a young child, a deadly disease diagnosed in a dear one, a fatal accident of someone we love, of course we feel sad. We human beings are designed to feel sorrow and misery when bad things happen. But those who realize the Truth about the Universal Law, know that it works like a boomerang. What goes around, comes around. Whatever is happening, is our own actions returning to us and we can't escape it.

But then, there is a mystery. Why do bad things happen to good people? We can reconcile ourselves to some tragic events that happen in the life of people who are cruel and selfish, but when we find genuine people, who are kind, honourable,

Godly, selfless, loving, and helpful suffer then we wonder, "How could such a person suffer?" People who find this mysterious are the ones who have not realized the Truth. They have not realized that apples can't grow on mango trees. They have not understood that bad things can't happen to good people.

Those who realize the Truth, realize that these seemingly good people must have some history of deeds that are not so good. Whether they are sins committed in secret or bad deeds of a distant past, they realize that the Universal Law of Karma makes no mistake. Otherwise you would see apples growing on mango trees. But that is impossible! The Universal Law will not permit it. They realize that if bad deeds have not been committed in this life, then there is a possibility of it being carried forward from a previous life.

Those who realize the truth are not heartless when they see a newborn baby suffer. They are not cruel when they do not shed tears in a sudden tragic accident. Their heart is not made of stone if they do not break down watching a dear one cry in disease. Realization of the Truth has made them as strong as steel and while they pass by misery every day that they live, they know beyond doubt that this is the unfolding of the Divine law. They do not curse God, nor do they blame anybody for the tragedies that unfold, but rather learn to live in acceptance and surrender. It may seem difficult to digest, but there is no other way. This is known to those who realize the truth.

Can we escape death? The ones who realize the Truth know we cannot. Realization makes them conquer the myth and the superstition that goes with death. They realize that the one who has died has moved on with their Karma, leaving the body behind. Can anybody doubt that the dead body will return to dust? The realized ones accept death gracefully, hoping and praying for the one who has departed. But they also know that our prayers will be heard but they cannot undo the actions performed by the one who has died. They know that we cannot undo the bad deeds of our near and dear ones, just like we cannot cause apples to grow on mango trees, no matter what! The law will not permit it. As we sow, so shall we reap, is a law that is understood by the ones who have realized the Truth.

Therefore, to conclude we can classify people into two major categories. The first set of people who think that they are not the body that dies, they move on as a Mind and Ego to another life. They move on to another life based on their cumulative Karma and based on their past actions, they are reborn. To them, they are ME – Mind and Ego, and not the physical body that dies. These people are quite different from the people who belong to the second category, the ignorant ones who think themselves to be the body. They constantly suffer, both physical pain and mental pain because they don't realize the Truth about the Law of Karma. They wonder why bad things happen to good people because they don't understand the Universal Law.

Therefore, what is the Truth that we must realize? Putting it all together, it is that good things and bad things happen in this world but nothing is really good or bad. Everything is perfect because it is all unfolding as per a perfect Universal Law. The Truth is that apples cannot grow on mango trees, just as bad things cannot happen to good people. If bad things are unfolding, these are fruits that are appearing due to the seeds that were planted long ago. The Truth is that there is a Universal Law that we cannot circumvent. Nobody can manipulate this law. It is also true that we do not complete our life on earth, settling all our deeds, both good and bad. Therefore, there is an unsettled account that remains when we die. It is absolutely true that it is this unsettled account that is the cause of our birth. A young child that suffers is not suffering due to a cruel God, nor is there a devil or ghost causing misery on earth. The Truth is that we are reborn based on our own past account and our Mind and Ego, ME, will experience either fortune or misfortune in a new life based on past actions as per the Universal Law. All this is the Truth and we cannot escape it. Realization is knowing without doubt that such is the Universal Law that unfolds in our life. When we do not realize the Truth, what do we do? We ask silly questions like, "Why do bad things happen to good people? Why do good people have to suffer? Why does a newborn child experience misery? Is God or the Creator cruel? Is God not powerful enough to eradicate misery from earth?" Realization of the Truth brings an end to such ignorant questions and liberates us from feeling helpless.

What then do the realized ones do? Is it that they escape from all misery and pain? Does Realization give them the gift of only good things and no suffering? Will such people be blessed to live a life where there is no suffering, no pain, and no misery? Will the realized ones not see disease and death? Of course, they will. Like anybody else, they will go through life, but they will not suffer. They live with peace, joy, and bliss despite whatever happens in life. While they pass misery that is caused by bad things that happen, they live blissfully. What is the secret blessing that is received by those who realize the Truth? While all those who realize are liberated from the misery of ignorance and they live blissfully, it all depends on how much realization really sinks into them. If they realize the truth and overcome the entire ignorance then they will not only live blissfully no matter what circumstance they face, but also they will go beyond it to be finally liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth and be united with the Divine.

Realize the Truth, don't live in the dark.
Nobody can escape suffering, this Truth you must mark.
What the source of misery is once you do know,
With peace, you will live and to bliss you will go.

IN A NUTSHELL - CHAPTER 9

Realize the Truth

- While there is misery and suffering in this world, and it is sad to see people suffer, we must realize the truth behind life and suffering. If we don't, we will live in ignorance and our misery will only grow.

- It is one thing to experience pain, but it is another to suffer the misery, feeling that this world is unfair or that God is unjust or not powerful enough to help us overcome our suffering.

- There is no doubt that this world is full of suffering. Everybody who is born must suffer and ultimately die. This does not mean that there is only suffering. We pass both pleasure and pain every now and then as we live.

- Some people even contemplate suicide so that all the misery of this world could come to an end. But those who realize the Truth, know that death is not the end, it is just a bend.

- They come to know of the Universal Law that bad things can't happen to good people. Of course, there is suffering, but we are the cause of our misery. Why do we blame God?

- The ones who realize that this universe operates on the Law of Cause and Effect, accept whatever is happening as an effect and realize that they are the cause, not God. They learn to live in acceptance and surrender.

10

LIVING BLISSFULLY NO MATTER WHAT

Those who realize the Truth, live a life of bliss, peace, and joy. What is the secret of their Happiness? How do they manage to smile despite all their suffering? Realization of the Truth gives them this gift of eternal joy and everlasting peace.

Chellaram was suffering from cancer but he was blissful. His body experienced physical pain but he knew that he was not the body. He was the Divine Soul. He did not let the misery affect him. Although death was around the corner, he would wake up every morning and visit the poorest of the poor. He would go to the beggars' colony and give food to the beggars. He would go to the blind school and take fruits for the children. He would visit homes for the physically challenged and support the residents with wheelchairs and provide artificial limbs. Although he was suffering, he did not let his suffering affect his bliss. His work gave him so much contentment and fulfillment that the dark shadow of cancer could not dampen his joy. There are people in this world like Chellaram who do not get affected by bad things. Bad things can't steal away their smiles. If you had met Chellaram, you would have wondered how he could be smiling and laughing all the time. Despite his disease, he was one fine example of someone who had realized the Truth that when bad things happen, it should not stop us from living blissfully.

Those who realize the Truth accept this world as a Cosmic Drama. They know that we are just actors, we come and we go and this world is nothing but a big show! The ones who realize the Truth, live with detachment and dispassion. They see without doubt that we come into this world with nothing and

when we go, we take nothing. They live with this Truth and don't let misery overtake their peace and joy.

When they see a tragedy in the drama of life, they watch it like a movie. They realize that they are just observers of the show, not the actors that most people think they are. Therefore, when something happens that causes them pain, they realize that life is both sunshine and rain. There will be loss and gain, but they watch everything happening on this humungous stage called the earth and they enjoy the show.

Dominic was a realized Soul. He had a strange wife and disrespectful children. Still, he did not live a life of misery. Whenever his wife caused him trouble, he would view it as a movie he was watching. He could not control her actions but he did not let her actions control his reaction. The amount his wife troubled him was enough to make him a maniac but he was blissful and peaceful. To add to the misery created by his wife, his children added cherries to the cake. They constantly disrespected him and expected his support despite their irresponsible behaviour. Anybody seeing Dominic would feel sorry for him but Dominic did not bother. He was a painter and he was busy making paintings and would often paint churches and temples, bringing a smile on people's faces. To him, the suffering he faced was just a passing phase and he believed it would soon be over.

There are some people who go for a movie and they cry. They go to a theatre and they sob because the plot is so sad, that the tragedy touches them deep inside their hearts. But the realized

ones are not bewildered by tragedy in the movie. They know it is just a movie, it is not real. But what makes them live blissfully is the realization that life itself is nothing more than a movie. We are all actors, we come, do our parts and go.

Robert was unfortunate to lose one leg in an accident but it did not stop him from travelling the world. While he seemed cursed to lose a limb, he was blessed with enough money and a lovely life partner. Together, they would go discover the world. Although Robert was either in a wheelchair or on crutches, it did not stop him from exploring the world. To him, the story of his life was such that his leg was his pain, but his resources were his boon. He learned to live a life of joy and enjoyed his life movie as it unfolded scene by scene.

What is it that makes others suffer, the pain that the realized ones have transcended? It is an understanding of the Universal Law of Karma, also known as the Law of Action and Reaction, the Law of Cause and Effect or the Law of the Boomerang. All these are names of the one essential law that governs the universe, the law that makes sure that only mangoes grow on mango trees. While most people in this world suffer when bad things happen, when they cry seeing misfortune happen to good people, when they break down at the untimely death of a dear one despite their constant prayers, the realized ones stay cool, calm and composed. The tragedies of life cannot rob their peace. They know whatever is happening, is happening as per the Universal Laws. More so, they know that they can do nothing about it. They realize whatever has been sown, will reap exactly what it deserves. There is no mystery or need for any contemplation once we realize the Truth.

Sheela seemed to be a very powerful woman. Tragedies came into her life, one after the other. But she knew that these tragedies were her own deeds returning to her. She was an ardent believer of Karma and she believed that whatever was happening in her life were her own actions coming back to her. Every time something bad happened, she would smile rather than frown because she knew that one more negative deed was redeemed from her account. Not everybody can be an optimist like Sheela but she had found a way to live peacefully and blissfully.

How do those who realize the Truth live blissfully? They rejoice in whatever happens, no matter what. They learn to live not labelling anything as good or bad because they know everything is perfect. Be it a comedy or a tragedy, they enjoy both scenes in the drama of life, with equanimity. They go one step further which makes normal people think they are crazy. When something seemingly bad happens, they rejoice. They are happy that a bad deed committed in the past has been redeemed. The negative has been cancelled and they live with hope that now the positive will unfold. If something unpleasant happens again, they celebrate again because they know that they can't escape from their own past actions. They accept both pleasure and pain with peace and live blissfully despite the trials and tribulations of life. They have understood the Universal Law and they are not affected by whatever happens in the world.

Boris lived a life that was like a yoyo, full of ups and downs. Success and failure kept playing games with him. He did not know initially

how to deal with the rampant changes that were sweeping his life. He was lucky to meet a Spiritual Master who taught him the art of living with surrender and acceptance. Initially, he would resist failure, but now, he would consider it to be a sunset that was causing temporary darkness and he knew that the sun would soon rise again. He learned how to accept the Divine will and surrender to the power of the Divine. His failures no more caused him misery, nor did he get too attached to success. He lived a balanced life but one thing never escaped and that was a smile on his face. He learned to deal with life and he learned to laugh at his failures. He knew that he could not escape from his own past actions, but he looked forward to all the goodness that came to him like a boomerang.

How do the realized ones live? Not only do they live joyously, peacefully and blissfully, but they also keep on doing good every day that they live. They keep on planting good deeds and they are very careful not to plant a single thorn, any evil because they know that it will come back to them. This attitude of living with joy, moment by moment, doing good in every act of life, makes the life of the realized ones, a life of bliss. While the world around them continues to suffer, both the tragedies that affect them, as well as the misery caused when bad things happen to others, the realized ones are unaffected by both. Neither does a personal infliction of pain nor does the sight of others suffering shakes the inner peace and bliss of the realized ones. Outwardly, they will show their compassion, care, and concern. But internally, they are not disturbed. They live as observers of this drama called life and they accept whatever is happening, knowing that it is the unfolding of the Universal Law.

Komal seemed to live a life of Divine peace. She was a fan of the Law of Karma and completely subscribed to its tenets. She knew apples can't grow on mango trees and therefore nothing troubled her. Good or bad, she accepted both as the grace of the Divine. Eventually, her goal was liberation. She knew while it looked like she was doing the actions, in reality it was her ego, mind, and body and not she who was in charge of her actions. Her goal was simple – to live as a realized soul. As long as she was alive, she had to act. She knew that she could not escape from action. Whatever actions she did, she took care they were positive and good actions because she was sure her Karma would come back to her. She lived her life being a seeker of the truth, hoping to be liberated from Karma and all the miseries of this world.

While the realized ones live blissfully, there are a few who are blessed. They are so blessed, that they transcend the Law of Karma. They go beyond the Law of Action and Reaction, Cause and Effect. They are the very few fortunate ones who escape from the suffering of this world as they achieve the Ultimate Goal of life.

Nothing is real, we come and we go,
This world is a big drama, it is just a cosmic show.
Whatever happens in the world, be it good or bad,
Those who realize the Truth, are glad and never sad.

IN A NUTSHELL - CHAPTER 10

Living Blissfully No Matter What

- Those who realize the Truth, live a life of bliss, peace, and joy. How do they manage to smile despite all their suffering?

- Those who realize the Truth accept this world as a Cosmic Drama. They know that we are just actors, we come and we go and this world is nothing but a big show!

- The tragedies of life cannot rob their peace. They know whatever is happening, is happening as per the Universal Laws.

- When something seemingly bad happens, they rejoice. They are happy that a bad deed committed in the past has been redeemed. The negative has been cancelled and they live with hope that now the positive will unfold.

- They accept both pleasure and pain with peace and live blissfully despite the trials and tribulations of life. They have understood the Universal Law and they are not affected by whatever happens in the world.

- Those who realize the Truth and overcome all the ignorance they live in, go on to be liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth. They are blessed not only with the Realization but also with Liberation and Unification with the Divine which is the Ultimate Goal of life.

11

THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF LIFE, LIBERATION AND UNIFICATION WITH THE DIVINE

What is the Ultimate Goal of life? Most people live a life like a yoyo. They experience both pleasure and pain. While good things happen, bad things also happen and they live a life that is a mix of joy and sorrow. The realized ones face miseries, tragedies, and misfortunes, but they realize apples can't grow on mango trees. They know whatever is unfolding is unfolding as per a Divine law, a Universal Law. Some call it Karma, some the Law of Action and Reaction and some the Law of Cause and Effect. While the realized ones live blissfully no matter what, not all of them who understand Karma are able to transcend Karma. Very few fortunate human beings realize the Truth and transcend this Universal Law. This is the Ultimate Goal of our life.

What is this goal and how can we achieve it? Normal human beings who understand Karma accept whatever happens gracefully. It is difficult for most to do so and thus we see humanity wailing and crying in moments of misfortune. But a good chunk of mankind today, understand this Universal Law. They don't need to be taught that apples can't grow on mango trees. They know that if bad things are happening, it is their own Karma. A very few try to escape from Karma. They are the ones who go on a quest to realize who is doing the Karma and who receives the reward of the Karma. In this quest to find the Truth about the law, some very fortunate ones are graced upon with this Ultimate Realization.

Those who understand the law know that whatever you do

comes back to you. They also understand that death is not the end, it is just a bend and that our account is not settled at death. How we are born, depends upon our own past actions. The law rewards the ME – the Mind and Ego, that is reborn in a new body. Somebody who dies, cannot settle all good and bad dues before death. The closing balance of good and bad gets stored in a corpus account, a kind of warehouse of Karma and every time life ends, the balance gets added into that account.

It is just like having 5 credit cards and debit cards from a bank. Each card does transactions just as there are deposits in some of our accounts. Some credit cards may have large debit balances and some debit cards may have large amounts of our deposits as a credit balance. When we close our account with the bank, the bank will merge all our accounts, our credits and debits, our expenses and deposits and come to a final net balance. So does the Law of Karma. The only difference is that it is not 5 simultaneous accounts but one account per life that gets added to our main account or corpus.

Each life, therefore, starts with an opening balance that we bring from our main account or corpus. If we have lot of positive or credit in our deposits, we can be born in luxurious circumstances. But if we have only negative balances, then our birth will be surrounded by suffering. While the corpus is the cause of the circumstance of our birth, it does not control our destiny. Our actions of the current life become responsible for what unfolds, despite our birth and our cumulative corpus.

Whatever we do in this lifetime, good or bad, becomes our current account. If we do a lot of good, we go far beyond our opening balance and create tons of good Karma, sometimes, enough to clear our negative corpus that may be stored in our 'carried forward Karma account'.

The point seekers contemplate is, "How long will this cycle go on and on? Are we going to be reborn again and again to experience a bouquet of roses and thorns or is there a way to escape from Karma?"

As seekers study, they come to know that the body is only an instrument that experiences the Karma. The one who creates the Karma is ME – Mind and Ego. After death, the Mind and Ego is reborn in another body, but the Karma account doesn't stop. It is an ongoing, continuous account that causes the circumstances of our next birth. So, Karma actually belongs to ME – Mind and Ego, and the body partly experiences good and bad between the period of its birth to death. The mind and ego continue to experience the positive and negative without death causing any difference. It is only a change of body. But the Karma continues.

In a sincere quest, some seekers contemplate that we are ME – Mind and Ego, not the body because the body dies. When they try to find the mind, they realize that there is no mind. We see the reflection of our eyes, nose, ears, face, and body in the mirror. If we want to see our heart, kidneys, and brain, we can see what lies inside the body through an X-ray or MRI. But has

anybody seen the picture of the mind? Where is the mind, we cannot find!

When a seeker who has realized the truth goes deeper to achieve the Ultimate Goal of life, he asks the question, "Who am I in reality?" This realization leads the seeker to attain liberation and unification with the Divine, our ultimate life goal. How does this happen?

The Mind and Ego, ME is only a subtle existence. It is born out of ignorance, not knowing who we truly are. In reality, we are neither the body that dies nor the ME - Mind and Ego that leaves at death. We are the Divine Soul. The Soul, the Spirit, *Atman* or Life Energy, that arrives at birth and departs at death. It is a power that gives us breath and keeps us alive. That is our real identity. Because we live in ignorance, we identify ourselves as the body. Those who understand Karma, identify themselves as ME – Mind and Ego. But those who realize the Ultimate Truth, realize they are neither the body nor ME - the Mind and Ego. They are the Life Energy, the *Atman* or the Divine Soul.

The moment we realize this Ultimate Truth, we achieve the Ultimate Goal of life. At death, the physical body will die, and we the Divine Soul, who realize we are not the mind and ego, get liberated from the body-mind complex, to be united with the Divine. There is no further birth. All the Karma that belonged to ME, Mind and Ego, drops like a pebble in the

ocean and we are freed from it. Because we live in ignorance, thinking that we are the "I" - the ego, the mind and the body, we consider our actions as "my actions," and thus, we create Karma. As we create Karma, we have to be reborn to redeem our Karma. When we realize we are not the ME, then we don't create any Karma. We live as the Divine Soul and do whatever is the Divine will as an instrument of the Divine. We are not the doer of action. We have no desires and we create no good or bad Karma. As the Divine Soul, alive in a body-mind complex, we receive Divine commands and execute them.

One who lives transcending Karma, lives a life of Yoga, of union with the Divine. Yoga may be of devotion, meditation, education or action. All these are different forms of Yoga, an offering to the Divine in complete surrender. There is no Ego that creates "my" actions. Just as the body will die at death, the ME – Mind and Ego will also die, liberating the Soul to unite with the Divine. This is the ultimate Realization of the Truth and the Ultimate Goal of humanity. Those who achieve this are liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth. They become one with the Divine and do not come back to live as a ME – Mind and Ego, in a body to experience joy and sorrow. They unite with the Divine and are transported to an abode of bliss, unknown to common man.

How does somebody who has realized the ultimate Truth live? A realized one accumulates no Karma. He renounces all actions as his own. He transcends ME – Mind and Ego and lives

gracefully in the body-mind complex doing the Divine Will as long as the body is alive. Such a person is a liberated Soul, although alive. Nothing affects a realized one. He lives with a steady intellect, discriminating the myth from the Truth, renouncing pleasures of the body and mind, living with discipline and desire for Liberation and the Lord. Such a person lives in eternal peace and joy, being conscious of his true identity, realizing that he is the manifestation of the Divine. He is nothing but Divine Energy, appearing as ME – the Mind and Ego, imprisoned in a body. On overcoming the ignorance and realizing the Truth, he is liberated from all suffering, present and past, and lives a life of bliss, with nothing affecting him. Everything happening around him is a cosmic drama and he lives as an observer till he is finally liberated at death. The Liberated one lives his life moment by moment, in peace and bliss. He does not swing into a past that is gone or a future not yet born. He is peaceful and blissful. This is the Ultimate Goal of life.

The Ultimate Goal of life has 3 steps. The first step is Realization. If we want to achieve the Ultimate Goal of life, we must realize the Truth, the Truth about the Universal Law and how it unfolds on earth. Realization will make us transcend the ordinary suffering that mortals experience. Whatever happens will not affect us if we live as realized souls.

This takes us to the second step of the Ultimate Goal – Liberation. Realization of the Truth liberates us from all misery and sorrow. Although bad things seem to happen, we are unaffected by these

things. We are able to transcend suffering post Realization and we are liberated from all kinds of misery and pain. The body may suffer, but we, the ones alive in the body, are liberated from suffering. The mind may worry and wander but Realization liberates us from stress and worry. Liberation also transcends the ego that seems to live in agony due to anger, hate, and revenge. Not everybody can reach this second step of the Ultimate Goal. While Realization itself is not for the ordinary, Liberation is a rare gift and it is difficult to find people who have climbed this second step of the Ultimate Goal of life.

From this rare minority, who have both Realization and Liberation, some blessed ones experience the third and final step of the Ultimate Goal. It is Unification with the Divine. Unless there is Realization of the Truth, which happens when we overcome all ignorance and unless we are liberated from all misery and sorrow as we live as the Divine Soul, not as the body or ME – the Mind and Ego, we can never experience Unification with the Divine. While Realization and Liberation happen during our lifetime, it is only at death that we can experience Unification. This liberates us from rebirth as we achieve the Ultimate Goal and we unite with the Divine.

Life has a purpose, there is an Ultimate Goal,
To realize we are not the body, nor mind but the Soul.
The ones who realize the Truth are free from misery,
At death they unite with the Divine and from Karma they are free.

IN A NUTSHELL - CHAPTER 11

The Ultimate Goal of Life, Liberation and Unification with the Divine

- The Ultimate Goal of life has 3 steps. The first step is Realization. If we want to achieve the Ultimate Goal of life, we must realize the Truth, the Truth about the Universal Laws and how they unfold on earth.

- This takes us to the second step of the Ultimate Goal – Liberation. Realization of the Truth liberates us from all misery and sorrow. The body may suffer, but we, the ones alive in the body, are liberated from suffering.

- Those who attain both Realization and Liberation, experience the third and final step of the Ultimate Goal. It is Unification with the Divine.

- Unless there is Realization of the Truth, which happens when we overcome all ignorance and unless we are liberated from all misery and sorrow as we live as the Divine Soul, not as the body or ME – the Mind and Ego, we can never experience Unification with the Divine which happens when the body dies.

- Once we realize the Ultimate Truth that we are not the body, mind, and ego but the Divine Soul, we get liberated from the body-mind complex. We realize that at death only the physical body will die and the Soul will be liberated to be united with the Divine.

AFTERWORD

All my life, I too wondered, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” When I saw people suffering, I would wonder – these are such wonderful people, then why are they made to suffer? I was a devout believer in God and I must have prayed to God, hundreds of times when I saw people suffering.

I myself experienced misery so many times and I would cry out to God, “Why, O Lord, has this happened?” I was in love with a girl for many years and when I proposed to her, she refused. I couldn't understand why. I set up a big business and one day, just as I was going to sleep, I got a call that my store was on fire. It was completely burnt down! Every now and then, misery struck my life and I could never understand why God is doing this to me. I always believed that God was in charge. “He is the creator of the universe. He can do anything he wants. Then why am I suffering?”

My business grew severalfold and I made millions. But misery never stopped attacking me. The problems grew, both in number and size, and while I made a lot of money, I spent sleepless nights worrying about my misfortunes.

It was much later in life that I was fortunate to meet my spiritual master. He taught me exactly how the law of Karma works and how we must learn to celebrate when something goes wrong, not regret it. My master was a genius. He not only taught me about Karma, but guided me how to live a life of surrender and acceptance. He led me on a path to realize the truth and this changed everything.

What did I realize? I realized that as human beings on earth, we perform certain actions. We cannot escape from these actions. Good or bad, they will return to us. What I further realized was that our actions are not redeemed immediately, just like some seeds grow into roots, shoots and fruits quickly, while others could take ages.

In my quest to realize the truth, I realized that what is returning to us in this life may not be the actions of this life, but rather, actions of the previous life or many past lives. I realized that the body will die, but the real ME – Mind and Ego, will be reborn based on my past actions. I also realized that we human beings cannot escape suffering. Whoever lives in this world, ultimately suffers and dies. The only way to escape such suffering is through liberation, being liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth. This happens when we realize that we are not the body or mind, but rather the Divine Soul.

My realization transformed my life. I no more worried about what was happening in the world because I knew it was a

cosmic drama. When I realized that we are not the body that we seem to be, but rather energy, all my fear disappeared. Realization helped me profoundly in two phases. In the first phase, the realization of the Universal Law made me understand that bad things cannot happen to good people. With God's Universal Laws in place, it is impossible for apples to grow on mango trees. God's programming of the world is perfect and we see it in our everyday life – as we sow, so do we reap. While this was the first profound realization in this context, the second realization, by far more profound, is the realization that I could transcend suffering. I could escape Karma and escape the cycle of death and rebirth. If only I lived as a realized soul, then none of the actions are mine. I live as a Divine instrument of the Lord, living and doing his will, seeking nothing for myself. This was a much larger realization and created a metamorphosis in my life. The first instant, I only understood the law and lived blissfully. But in the second instant, I transcended the law, I went beyond it, to be liberated from Karma and to live a life of union with the Divine, in bliss, peace, and joy.

This realization which leads to Liberation was not easy to achieve. I had to go beyond my body and my senses, my mind and the ego and it was a big challenge and continues to be challenging every day as I live. After all, we live in a body mind complex, and till we are alive, the ME – Mind and Ego, pulled by the body, drags us into the clutches of this alluring world.

My Goal is very clear – I want to go beyond all suffering and be liberated from a possible rebirth after death. I realize even now that it is possible, provided I live as the Soul, not the ego, mind, and body.

As I look at the world today I see different kinds of people. There are people who are blissfully ignorant about the Law of Karma. They just exist. Nothing matters to them. They don't know the meaning of living with ethics and values. Unfortunately, they may suffer the most. They don't understand why bad things happen. There is another set of people who understand the Divine Law of Action and Reaction. They are very conscious of their Karma or actions, therefore, they live ethically and follow moral principles in their day to day life. Their lives are far more peaceful. When something bad happens, they accept it gracefully. They do not suffer knowing very well that it is their own Karma, their past actions returning to them. I also see a very tiny group, a minority, who realizes that they are neither the body nor the mind but the Divine Soul. These few people transcend the day to day miseries of life, because they realize the truth that they are not the body and mind but the Divine Soul. They move towards the Ultimate Goal of life, Liberation. However, they experience a war within with their own Mind and Ego - ME. The ME does not permit them to live with their realization. If they succeed they are liberated but if they don't, they also suffer. Such is the world!

It is ironical that in this world, a small minority of people are

visually blind but the vast majority are spiritually blind. They struggle with life coping with what they call bad luck, crying and praying to God when misfortunes strike. It makes me sad to see such people and thus after my realization, I have made it my mission to help people realize the Truth.

This book, "Why Bad things can't Happen to Good People!", based on the principle – apples can't grow on mango trees, is an effort to help humanity understand the Universal Law. It aims to help people realize who they truly are, understand their purpose on earth and ultimately be liberated, not just from the misery of the world, but from the constant cycle of death and rebirth. This is the mission of my life.

Know ye that bad things can't happen to good people.
If you have such a thought, your thought is very feeble!
Have you ever seen apples growing on a mango tree?
It's just not possible for such a thing to ever be.

POEM

Why do bad things happen to good people?
Why does suffering come to the weak and feeble?
Misery doesn't come to us simply
Whatever fruit we plant, will grow on the tree

Why do we see good people suffer?
They pray to God, but are denied supper
The result is not God's decree
It's a Universal Law, you will soon agree

The bad you do, comes back to you
As you sow, so shall you reap
If you want apples, you must plant apples
Otherwise, there will be no apples on your tree

People think that it is God in heaven
Giving cruel orders from cloud eleven
Is it true that God is passing the decree?
Or is it a law unfolding that we see?

The law is known as the Law of Karma
It is this law that causes all the drama!
If you understand the law, you will agree
That apples can't grow on a mango tree!

There will be no reaction, unless there is an action
There will be no effect unless there is a cause
Apples or mangoes, be it one, two or three
What we plant, is what we will see on the tree

But why do bad things happen to good people?
We hear people question, but the logic is feeble
It is expecting apples to appear on a mango tree
But how can apples grow on a mango tree?

Is this something difficult to understand?
Is it unique or does it happen in every land?
The fruit you plant, will be the fruit on the tree
Just like there are mangoes on every mango tree

Have you seen a new born suffer?
Some are born fortunate, the circumstances differ
There must be a reason, you will agree
Otherwise, why would this ever be?

We may not remember, but the law remembers the past
Whatever we do, will be counted till the last
Good or bad, whatever be the degree
Will appear as the fruit that we planted on the tree

Some people question, "Is there life after death?"
Or is the story over when we take our last breath?
When we watch some children born with a smile and glee
We realize this is no magic, nothing happens for free

All this happens by a law on earth
There is no luck or chance involved in our birth
Fortunate or unfortunate, doesn't come randomly
The circumstances of our birth don't just happen simply

Who is in charge, who controls our destiny?
Is there a power that is issuing the decree?
Happy or unhappy, can prayer make it be?
Or is it our own deeds that will make our destiny?

Till when will we live in ignorance and cry?
Looking at our misfortune and then asking why
As long as we don't realize the law of destiny
Whatever are our deeds, our future will be

If we want to live in bliss and peace
If we want all our miseries to cease
Our life can be a jamboree
If we learn the Universal Law of the tree

Bad things can't happen to good people, you must know
This is the law that exists in our life show
If there is tragedy, then don't disagree
It is what we planted that is appearing on our tree

By
AiR
Atman in Ravi

ABOUT THE AUTHOR – AiR

AiR - *Atman* in Ravi, is an embodied Soul whose only mission in life is to help people realize the Truth.

He was born in Bangalore on October 15, 1966. At a very young age, Ravi V. Melwani mastered the craft of business and became a very successful businessman who revolutionized retailing in India with the stores KidsKemp, Big KidsKemp, and Kemp Fort.

After making millions, he realized that life is not just about making money. He shut down his business at the age of 40, transformed his life to RVM, living by the RVM philosophy – Rejoice, Value Life, and Make a Difference. He started doing H.I.S. work – Humanitarian, Inspirational and Spiritual work. His mission was to 'Make a Difference' in this world before his journey was over.

As a part of the humanitarian initiative, a charitable hospital and charitable homes were set up with an aim to provide free medical treatment and care to the poor, destitute, and needy.

Today, over 600 homeless and suffering people are served and cared for in destitute homes and provided with free shelter, food, clothing, and medical care.

A School of Inspiration was set up that inspired the lives of many people through motivating talks, inspirational books and videos, and thought-provoking quotes.

A Shiva Temple was built in the year 1995 in Bangalore, which is now known as the Shivoham Shiva Temple. AiR now believes that religion is just a kindergarten of Spirituality, and we all have to go beyond religion to truly realize God.

One day, his Guru provoked him to introspect: What is the purpose of life? Is life just meant to seek pleasures and to live and die without any purpose? What happens after death? Will we be reborn? Where is God? Several questions like these took him on a quest, a search for the Truth. He gave up his life of Achievement and Fulfilment in search of the final peak of life: Enlightenment.

After a few years of intense search in retreat, deep in the mountains, he realized that we are not this Body. We are the Soul, the Atman. He changed his name to AiR –*Atman* in Ravi. He metamorphosed to AiR and gave up his entire life as RVM and started living as an instrument of God doing his Divine Will. This led to several Realizations that formed his new mission of life – to help people Realize the Truth.

Since then, AiR's life has been dedicated to reaching out and helping people to eradicate the ignorance that we live in. Truth is Truth but our Mind does not realize that. With AiR's own Realization, he has published several books, written bhajans, blogs, quotes, poems and taken up several other initiatives that can direct people towards the Truth. His vision, now, is to help people to Ask, Investigate, and Realize. He believes that unless people ask questions, they will never start a quest and even if they start the quest unless they really investigate, they will not realize the Truth. This Truth cannot be learned in a school, college or university, it must be realized. AiR has dedicated his life to helping people realize the Truth.

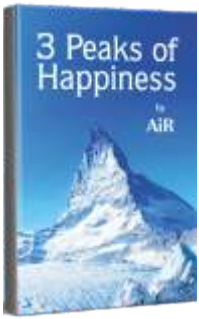
Started with Nothing…
Became Something…
Achieved Everything,
Only to realize - we are Nothing!

BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

1. Talaash

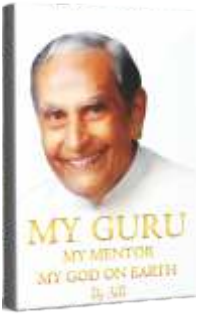
'Talaash' means Search or Quest. This book by AiR is his personal journey to realize the Truth where he shares his Realization that we are not the Body and the Mind that we seem to be. We are a Power, the Divine Life Force that is known as Soul, Spirit or *Atman*. This search and quest by AiR made him transform his life. It is a quest that made him realize the Truth. It might be just that book which inspires you to Liberation.

2. 3 Peaks of Happiness



3 Peaks of Happiness by AiR is a simple book that talks about the quest of all humanity. Everybody wants to be happy. But is everybody happy? No. The reason is we are stuck on the first peak of Happiness – Achievement. Only 20% of the people are lucky to climb the second peak of Happiness – Fulfilment, which comes from contentment. But there is a third peak beyond. The third peak of Happiness will liberate you from the prisons of misery and sorrow and give you eternal Joy and Bliss.

3. My Guru, My Mentor, My God on Earth



My Guru, My Mentor, My God on Earth is a book by AiR in which he shares his experiences with his Guru who was not just his Guru and Mentor, but also his God on Earth. We all need a coach, a teacher to help us understand, guide us to live life and this book 'My Guru' will inspire you to find your Guru or to make your relationship with your Guru more fulfilling and meaningful.

4. I will Never Die. Death is not "The End"

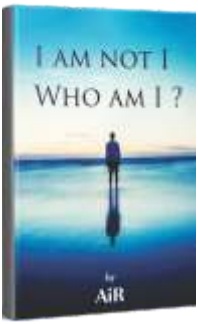
In the journey of his life, AiR realized many Truths. One of the Truths was that he would never die. The Body will die, but the one who lives in the Body never dies. We are not the bodies that we wear; we are the ones who wear the Body. Death is not the end. It is a bend to transcend. This book reveals the Truth about Death.

5. Death is Not "The End". Death is "Liberation"

Death is Not "The End". Death is "Liberation" – the second book in the series of books on death by AiR – touches upon the secret of the Kathopanishad, which talks about what

happens at death. One of two things happens – if we think we are the Body and Mind as a doer, we are reborn. But if we think we are not the Body and Mind, but the Energy, we are liberated to eternal Joy and Peace.

6. I am not I. Who am I?



I am not I. Who am I? – is a very interesting book by AiR, which talks of his quest and Realization that we are not who we think we are. We have a house, but we are not the house. We have a car, but we are not the car. We have a Body, but we are not the Body. We may have a Mind, but we are not the Mind. Who are we? Realize the Truth.

7. The Mind is a Rascal

Can you believe that the Mind is a rascal? You always thought that the Mind is king – it is everything. But just try this. Sit quietly for an hour, and try to find the Mind. Where is it? You will find that the Mind doesn't exist. This amazing book by AiR will teach us that the Mind is our enemy. It is the one that makes us suffer. It is time to find the rascal and to kill it. How do we do it?

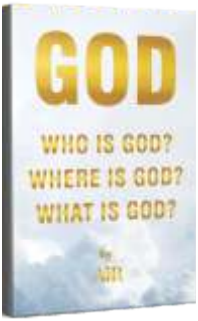
8. A Cosmic Drama

This book authored by AiR challenges us to think that

whatever is happening in life is not real. It is nothing but a drama. The earth is a big stage and we are all actors who come and go. There is no need to worry and cry till we die. If we understand the Truth, we can enjoy the show called life.

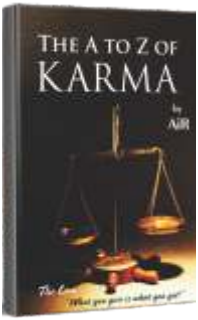
9. Who is God? Where is God? What is God?

Well, this might seem to be a simple set of questions, but nobody really knows the answers. We all know that God exists. We pray to a God as per our religion but what is the Truth about God? Has anybody seen God? Where is God? This simple book will change your perception and belief about God and bring you closer to this Power called God. It will help you realize God.

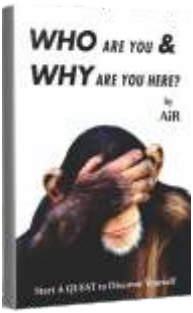


10. The A to Z of Karma

Most people are aware of the concept of Karma – the Law that states, "What you give is what you get." But not everybody knows the A to Z of Karma, that we can actually transcend Karma, escape from it and achieve Moksha, Nirvana, Liberation or Enlightenment. This book reveals the secret – of eternal Joy and Peace - a life without any misery or suffering.



11. Who Are You & Why Are You Here?



This a simple book which challenges us to discover the secret of our life. Most of us think we are the Body-Mind complex, but in reality, we are not. The Body will die and return to dust. Where is the Mind, we cannot find. Who are we in reality? And beyond that what is the purpose of life on earth? This book will give you all the answers.

12. The 4th Factor

Man thinks that he can achieve anything. He believes that there is nothing in this world he can't do. But, he doesn't realize that his efforts and equipment are not enough to decide the results of his actions. Sometimes, he does his best but things don't work out the way he wants. He then realizes the importance of the 4th Factor, a factor that makes the possible, possible and without its consent even the possible becomes impossible.

13. Be Happy in the NOW!

Every human being on earth wants to be Happy. There is nobody who enjoys pain. People want to achieve Happiness but they fail to realize that

Happiness is the journey itself, not the destination. Then, what is the secret of eternal Joy, Bliss, and Peace? It is being Happy in the NOW. Every time we let the suffering of yesterday take charge of our life, we destroy the Joy of today. When our thoughts anxiously jump into what may happen in the future, we lose the tranquillity of the present moment. We seem to be like helpless monkeys jumping from one branch to another, from yesterday to tomorrow. And in the bargain, we lose the gift of being Happy in the present. With this book, AiR hopes to inspire people to live life moment by moment, if they really want to be Happy.

14. Questions You Must Answer Before You Die

Most of us live and die but we don't ask the question – Why? We just exist! We don't want to invest time in asking essential questions that are actually needed to lead a fulfilling and blissful life. There are so many critical questions that we must answer before our journey of life is over. What will happen to us after we die? Who created this universe? How can we be Happy all the time? Who is God, where is God, what is God? Like this, there are so many questions which we are ignorant about and somehow, we believe that ignorance is Bliss. We Blissfully live in ignorance till we die. Isn't it time to stop and ask questions?

15. Suffer No More

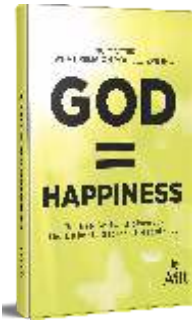
Suffer No More is a personal experience of overcoming anguish, anxiety, distress, and grief. We all suffer physical pain. Who on earth can escape from it? But while there is pain, can we do away with the suffering? What is suffering? While we all experience it, have we gone on a quest to understand what the primary cause of misery is? We live in this ignorance, this myth that suffering is an unavoidable part of life. We can be free from suffering if only we realize that we are the prisoners of negative emotions that continue to make us miserable. Suffer No More is an analysis of suffering, what causes it and how we can overcome it. If one wants to truly live with eternal Joy and everlasting Peace, it's possible! This book will help you Realize the Truth and Suffer No More!

16. Success is not Happiness... Happiness is Success

Everybody wants to succeed. If one goes deep into the psychology of winning, one will realize that people want to win because this makes them happy, just as failure makes them miserable. People want to succeed and they do everything possible to win because they want to be happy. In fact, humanity, by and large, believes that Success is like a cause, of

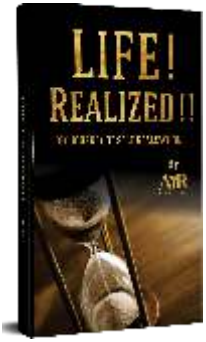
which Happiness is the effect. In the present book the readers will discover the reality that Success equals Happiness is an illusion. No doubt Success creates a sense of gratification that makes us Happy but Real Happiness is beyond achievement. It is contentment and fulfillment. It's time for us to realize the Truth. Instead of chasing Success to be Happy, we should try to be Happy. That is true Success. We must realize that Success is not Happiness, Happiness is Success.

17. God = Happiness



We understand what it means to be happy, especially when we compare it to those times when we are miserable and unhappy. But how exactly is our state of joy or sorrow connected to God, remains a mystery. Yes, we pray thinking of God as somebody in heaven who has a magic wand with which he controls our Happiness. But is this true or is there something else that we are ignorant about? In his quest to discover Truth and the purpose of life, the author found answers that liberated him from misery and sorrow. He also realized that people didn't know where exactly to search for Happiness. All pray to God but do we know the Real Truth about God? We may believe in any religion but that hardly matters, because God is beyond religion. While we evolve in life, we don't spiritually evolve to realize that God is far more powerful than what we imagine. This book is not about religion. It takes us far beyond religion to Realize the Truth about God and how God is Happiness.

18. Life! Realized!!



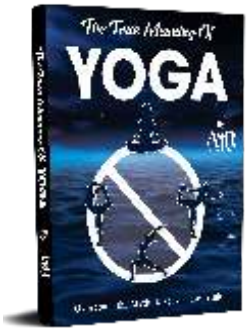
The present book is a personal reflection of the author who has written several books on life, happiness, and almost everything that matters in the life journey. Like anybody else, he too spent many years of his life chasing success and money but then, he took an exit from this first peak of happiness - Achievement, transformed his life and started living with Contentment and Fulfillment. He realized that what mattered the most was his Life Realization. There were many questions in his mind and after a profound investigation, he discovered the Truth. He decided to pen down all his realizations together to share them with the world. Those who wish to start a quest of self-realization and God-realization must read this book as it will direct them towards the path which will help them realize the Truth.

19. True Love is Bliss...Not Just a Kiss

True Love is bliss, not just a kiss. It is sad that Love which is the source of joy and happiness, is not understood by the world. The world thinks of Love to be just hugs and kisses, romance and sex. Is this True Love? No. True Love is Love from the Soul. It is Divine Love that manifests as Love from the

day we are born to the day we die. Stop! Discover True Love and live your life with eternal bliss and joy.

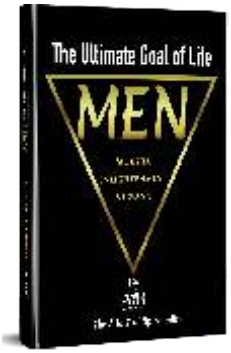
20. True Meaning of Yoga



Yoga, today, is primarily taught as a set of body postures or *Asanas*. Some take it a step further and include breathing exercises referred to as *Pranayama.* But this is not true Yoga! This may be good for our physical well-being but true Yoga is something completely different. Those who think that Yoga is just about stretching the body will be in for a big surprise when they read this book. It will trigger their mind and help them overcome the misconceptions about Yoga. Yoga, in reality, is a Union with the Divine. There is no doubt that as part of the entire Yogic experience, some saints advocated certain body postures and breathing exercises to be a part of the overall Yoga practice, but most definitely, these by themselves are not Yoga. This book attempts to explain everything about Yoga, its actual meaning and significance, how it must be practised and how through Yoga, one can be liberated and experience Ultimate Bliss and Divine Peace.

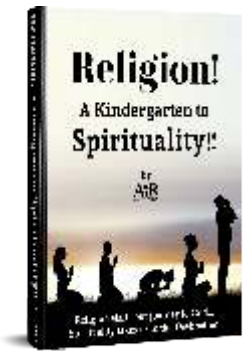
21. The Ultimate Goal of Life, MEN – Moksha, Enlightenment, Nirvana

What is the Ultimate Goal of life? The whole world believes it is to be happy, to escape from misery and suffering. If we want to escape from all misery to live a life of Eternal Peace and



Everlasting Joy, the answer is MEN - Moksha, Enlightenment, and Nirvana. These are the three most tenable concepts that help us reach our Ultimate Goal of Liberation and then Unification with the Divine. The words may be different, but this is the one secret to everlasting Happiness. Let us discover how to live a life that teaches us the A to Z of Spirituality and helps us achieve Bliss and Peace. This book will show us a path that is beyond religion, a path that will make us Realize the Truth and will liberate us from misery and sorrow.

22. Religion! A Kindergarten to Spirituality



We don't choose our Religion. When we are born, we start following a Religion based on our family's belief system. Each Religion says that God is the Creator of this world and we grow up having faith in our Religion. Less than 1% of humanity stops and asks questions about the validity of what their Religion preaches. They realize the Truth about God and understand that whatever they were taught was very basic. The present book explains the fact that Religion is only the first step towards God-Realization but we get so pulled into rituals and superstitions that we do not pursue a Spiritual path that

makes us investigate the Truth about God. We do not Realize that Religion is only a Kindergarten, of which Spirituality is the University, and together they can lead us to our Ultimate Goal of Realizing God.

And Now

23. Why Bad things can't Happen to Good people!

Coming Soon

24. Life is...
Liberation from Ignorance and Finding true Enlightenment

If you have any questions on happiness, suffering, success, life, rebirth, liberation or anything related to spirituality, you can visit Ask AiR, ask your questions and AiR will answer them.

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WHY **BAD** THINGS **CAN'T HAPPEN TO GOOD** PEOPLE!

When a tragedy befalls a man, he gets shocked, disturbed and wonders, "Why me?" He looks up at the sky and questions the Creator, "Why is there so much injustice on earth?"

For centuries, man has lived in ignorance, suffering in misery helplessly. When things go beyond his control, he turns to God and folds his hands in prayer. He doesn't realize that bad things cannot happen to good people, just as apples cannot grow on mango trees.

People don't understand that there is a Universal Law, the Law of Karma, the Law of Action and Reaction that controls everything that happens on earth. Nobody can escape from this law. Those who understand the law, live an ethical life. They do good deeds and create for them a destiny of Joy and Peace.

Of course, bad things happen but these are reactions to our own past actions. Because we don't realize this, we suffer this seeming injustice.

This book will help us realize the Truth of why things happen the way they happen, and teach us a way to live with Peace and Bliss without asking the question "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

A.i.R.
AiR Institute of Realization
Ask *Investigate* Realize

By
AiR
Atman in Ravi

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Kemp Fort Mall, #97, Old Airport Road, Bangalore - 560017
+91 98451 55555 | www.air.ind.in | air@air.ind.in